

THE LETTERS OF
JANE AUSTEN

UNIFORM WITH THIS VOLUME

THE LETTERS OF
MARY RUSSELL MITFORD

THE LETTERS OF
HANNAH MORE

BLUE-STOCKING LETTERS

Each volume edited, with an Introduction, by

R. BRIMLEY JOHNSON

THE BODLEY HEAD

THE LETTERS OF
JANE AUSTEN

SELECTED
WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
R. BRIMLEY JOHNSON

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PREFACE

THE *Letters* of Jane Austen were first issued in 1884 by Lord Brabourne, and the present, also the first, selection is published with the kind permission of his son, Captain the Hon. Michael Knatchbull, M.C. These include those to Cassandra, to her nieces Fanny and Anna. The letters to Francis Austen first appeared in *Jane Austen's Sailor Brothers*, by J. H. Hubback and Edith Hubback (John Lane), 1905. By the generous courtesy of Mr. R. A. Austen-Leigh, who has kindly looked over my proofs and corrected a few errors in the original Edition of the *Letters*, I have been allowed to include from *Jane Austen: Her Life and Letters*, by William and R. A. Austen-Leigh, 1913, the letters to Martha Lloyd, Charles Austen, and to Edward and Caroline Austen—younger children of James.

R. B. J.

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PART II

To Martha Lloyd

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To Francis Austen

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 " *August 10*
 " *September 9*
 " *September 28*
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 " *December*

To her niece, Caroline

- 1815 [CHAWTON], *December 6*
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 " *March 26*

To her nephew, Edward

- 1817 COLLEGE STREET, WINCHESTER, *May 27*

Largely, no doubt, her irrepressible and wholly spontaneous humour preserved the balance of her emotions ; saved her reason from clouding a naturally sunny outlook ; keeping open for her so many and diverse avenues of delight.

Her capacity for sheer nonsense is unrivalled, and the certainty of Cassandra's unfailing appreciation more than doubled the value of the gift. She was a happy woman who could tell her sister that "Mr. Children's two sons are to have one wife between them, a Miss Holwell, who belongs to the Black Hole at Calcutta" ; and announce a plan for "having a steady cook and a young, giddy housemaid with a sedate middle-aged man, who is to undertake the double office of husband to the former and sweetheart to the latter. No children, of course, to be allowed on either side."

Cassandra, I feel convinced, was duly impressed with the enormity of Tom Lefroy's "one fault—that his morning coat was a great deal too light," and would have decided, as Jane did, to "refuse him unless he promised to give it away." She, too, perfectly understood that "Mr. Richard Harvey's match" must be "put off till he had got a better Christian name, of which he had great hopes" ; and would lament "how unequally the gifts of Fortune were bestowed" upon "the not ill-looking Mr. W." whose "name was Henry,"

though she had "seen many a John and Thomas much more agreeable."

There is no real cynicism in such light-handed wit, that laughs at its own shrewdest hits: the woman of fashion "at once expensively and nakedly dressed"; the wife "discovered to be everything that the neighbourhood could wish her, silly and cross as well as extravagant"; the "amusing scene" when "Mrs. B. thought herself obliged to leave her 'party' to run round the room after her drunken husband"; and Mrs. Blount, looking "exactly as she did in September, with the same broad face, diamond bandeau, white shoes, pink husband, and fat neck."

This is the humour, we should remember, that taught her to write so cheerfully of their "two very nice-sized lodging-rooms, with dirty quilts and everything comfortable": that inspired the comment upon a rash marriage—"As to money, that will come, you may be sure, *because they cannot do without it.*" An optimism that is kind.

There have, however, been contradictory interpretations of Jane Austen's views on marriage. Scott "opened" by complaining that all her heroines were materially-minded and calculating, if not mercenary; and the preposterous assertion that Elizabeth was more in love with Pemberley than with its "noble owner" is still believed by

“the blind.” On the other hand, a discriminating critic “can find no solution of the problem” —why Elizabeth forgave “Darcy’s insulting criticism of her nearest relations”—“unless it be in Jane Austen’s belief in the overmastering power and the sufficiency of love. In her philosophy love prevails over prudence, family feelings, social conditions, worldly propriety. When love comes in at the door all other considerations fly out of the window. Wickham and Willoughby would have been forgiven if they had been true lovers; they are condemned because they are poor creatures, led by appetite, ambition, or avarice, not victims of high passion: such natures do not approach the sanctity of love between two equal and exalted spirits.” The writer is greatly “interested in this high-flown sentiment because all her sentiments are in accordance with commonsense.”

I, too, am “interested”; though I confess the argument appears to me somewhat overstated. At least, her heroines were all “suitably” married; but one should rather, perhaps, consult the letters themselves on such a point. “Single women,” she once remarked, “have a dreadful propensity for being poor, which is one very strong argument in favour of matrimony”; but, on the other hand, “Earle and his wife live in the most private manner imaginable, without keeping a servant of any kind.

What a prodigious innate love of virtue she must have, to marry under such circumstances." Here, commonsense seems to exclude romance ; and as a working-day philosophy, she always and everywhere commends the prudent match.

The fact is she knew how few of us can attain the ideal ; how much happiness we may miss by refusing to accept what life has to offer ; remembering always that " marriage is a great improver." Lord Brabourne generously published five letters from Jane Austen to his mother, her favourite niece, who was giving up a man to whom she had been strongly attracted, because " his religious views eventually induced him to think that dancing and other social amusements ought to be eschewed and avoided by Christian people."

" There *are* such beings in the world," writes her aunt, " perhaps one in a thousand, as the creature you and I should think perfection, where grace and spirit are united to worth, where the manners are equal to the heart and understanding, but such a person may not come in your way, or, if he does, he may not be the eldest son of a man of fortune, the near relation of your particular friend, and belonging to your own county. . . . But indeed," she adds, " you must not let anything depend on my opinion : your own feelings, and none but your own, should determine such an important point."

There follow, however, two hints of wisdom and understanding help :

“ It is very true that you never may attach another man his equal altogether ; but if that other man has the power of attaching you *more*, he will be in your eyes the most perfect . . . the unpleasantness of appearing fickle is certainly great, . . . but nothing can be compared to the misery of being bound *without* love—bound to one, and preferring another.”

After all love must decide ; and Fanny proved her worth :

“ You are inimitable, irresistible. You are the delight of my life. Such letters, such entertaining letters, as you have lately sent ! such a description of your queer little heart ! such a lovely display of what imagination does. You are worth your weight in gold, or even in the new silver coinage. I cannot express to you what I have felt in reading your history of yourself—how full of pity and concern, and admiration and amusement, I have been ! You are the paragon of all that is silly and sensible, commonplace and eccentric, sad and lively, provoking and interesting. Who can keep pace with the fluctuations of your fancy, the capprizios of your taste, the contradictions of your feelings ? You are so odd, and all the time so perfectly natural—so peculiar in yourself, and yet so like everybody else.”

In the end we see that Jane Austen’s conclusions would be personal in every case ; the ultimate test purely emotional. As usual she is not interested in

theories, but in her friends. For herself we are told, with tantalizing ambiguity, there had been romance—and disappointment ; but the traditions are too elusive for profitable speculation. The statements from different sources, and all—apparently—second-hand, may be referred to one episode or to several : the end, by one account, in death ; by another, in the young man withdrawing without explanation ; by a third, in her changing her own mind. It has been said to account for the break of thirteen years between the two periods of rapid composition ; to explain the exceptionally deep emotion of *Persuasion*. But Cassandra, we know, was engaged to a young clergyman who died in the West Indies ; and Anne Elliot may well be derived from her. *Pride and Prejudice*, when offered for publication in 1797, was refused by return of post ; and, with three complete novels in her desk, Jane Austen may very reasonably have given up writing for a time ; though, no doubt, only by a strong effort of will. *Northanger Abbey*, indeed, had been accepted and paid for in 1803 ; but the purchasers' refusal to publish, repeated in 1809, was not encouraging ; and she did not start upon another novel until *Sense and Sensibility* had actually appeared.

There is, in fact, no real evidence of romance deeply influencing her life ; if romance there were.

The letters contain occasional references to different suitors ; but none of them serious enough to reveal much. Of the Cambridge ‘fellow,’ who would have lost his income by marrying and did marry—some one else—directly he got a living ; she writes :

“ He was a piece of perfection, noisy perfection, himself ; which I always recollect with regard. . . . I could wish *her* to be of a silent turn and rather ignorant, but naturally intelligent and wishing to learn, fond of cold veal pies, green tea in the afternoon, and a green window-blind at night.”

Or again, we read :

“ There is less love and more sense, in his present hopes, than sometimes appeared before, and I am very well satisfied. It will all go on exceedingly well, and decline away in a very reasonable manner. . . . It is most probable that our indifference will soon become mutual, unless his regard, which appeared to spring from knowing nothing of me at first, is best supported by never seeing me.”

Jane Austen has been accused, not only of materialism, but of indifference to religion : in the characters of her clergymen heroes ; in her adherence to an inactive church ; and in her conventional moral judgments. We seem unable to realise that orthodoxy can be ever sincere ; that many deeply religious people seldom speak of their faith ; that the tone and atmosphere

of a story may have more influence than theological discussion, eloquent preaching, or dramas of sin. Jane Austen's determined silence upon the spiritual may be called fastidious ; but she is outspoken and emphatic in looking for a foundation of high principles as essential to character. The Crawfords, despite their charm and good feeling, are lost without it ; no sinner—in fiction or real life—was ever punished more severely than Maria Bertram ; and Lydia Bennet was denied—what her creator certainly held to be the greatest blessing in life—her sisters' love.

But she does not set the “unprincipled” altogether outside the pale ; nor proclaim them incurable. Anne was even attracted by William Elliot ; and the Crawfords had “moral” good taste. It is a strange misreading of Jane Austen that would find Fanny “less interesting as well as less virtuous,” had she accepted Henry Crawford. It ignores the influence of goodness, the keynote of Fanny and Edmund himself. It ignores Jane Austen's clear and generous discrimination between the vicious and the weak. Henry Crawford lacked strength to resist temptation because his principles were not “upright” ; but he loved and admired Fanny's practical goodness ; would have risen to it and made her happy. What he missed—the best in him—is the measure of his crime.

Southampton ; where Martha Lloyd (sister of Mrs. James Austen, and afterwards Frank's second wife) practically entered the family, warmly welcomed by all. Meanwhile the Henry Austens were settled in London, and we hear something of Jane's gay visits to Sloane Street, Hans Place, or Henrietta Street, at musical parties or " the play."

But it was an older brother, Edward Knight, who, in the end, provided the widow's family with a second home in the cottage within half a mile of his own Chawton Manor ; where they settled down in 1809 to that easy and constant sociability between the " Great House " and " the Cottage," so dramatically portrayed in *Persuasion*, as it had been in *Sense and Sensibility* ; unspoiled, however, by such petty jealousies as Mary Musgrove's, or such patronizing condescension as Lady Middleton's.

Jane, we know, wrote three of her great novels at Steventon ; and now her genius once more re-awakened to full control. With no less of brilliant vivacity the second three were conceived and perfected in the quiet evening of her short life ; and death found her with the revised chapter of *Persuasion* and the lively opening of *Sanditon* in her desk.

We hear of trouble for Henry Austen and disappointment of a legacy for her mother during these last years ; but no very clear cause or under-

standing of the almost hidden, but fatal, decline. She pretended that she could rest more comfortably upon two chairs covered with cushions ; lest the permanent invalid mother should be tempted to give up the family couch ; and even Cassandra does not appear to have felt any grave alarm. It was too late when at last they carried her to Winchester for more skilled advice ; but we are grateful, at least, for the accident that secured her long rest in William of Wykeham's famous Cathedral.

III

“ I have now attained the true art of letter-writing, which we are always told is to express on paper exactly what one would say to the same person by word of mouth. I have been talking to you almost as fast as I could the whole of this letter.”

The “ published correspondence ” of Jane Austen does not admit us to any secrets of the Confessional ; and of the letters Cassandra's sensitive reticence bid her destroy we may not think. Here we can learn little, or nothing, of her thoughts, her feelings, or her dreams : little even of the daily intimate life. But the letters establish, beyond question, all we have been told of her enduring love for Cassandra, her eager affection for her sailor-brothers, her perfect sympathy with the favourite nieces, Anna and Fanny.

They confirm, too, and indeed may be claimed to prove, the spontaneous, and yet studied, methods by which she transformed common life into high art. Here, as in *Love and Freindship* and other fragments or unrevised experiments, we have a continual flow of extemporaneous thumbnail sketches and five-minute scenes or dialogues, no less perfectly phrased than any few inches of her most "polished ivory" miniatures; only not set in their place to complete the composition. They are colder and harder, at times; because not brought to life by a tender imagination; as in burlesque she is remorseless towards the puppets of artificial romance. Because her family always would understand, she does not stop to add humanity to her wit.

It happens, moreover, that her beloved Anna, the clever and charming daughter of James, was at one time busy about writing novels; and her aunt's sympathetic advice—often quoted, it should be observed, from Cassandra—reveals several important details of Jane Austen's own theory and practice.

"Your Aunt C. does not like desultory novels."—"You describe a sweet place, but your descriptions are often more minute than will be liked. You give too many particulars of right hand and left."—"You are now collecting your people delightfully, getting them exactly into such a spot as is the delight of my life. Three or four families in a country village is the very thing to work on."—"I wish

you would not let Devereux plunge into a 'vortex of dissipation.' I do not object to the thing, but I cannot bear the expression ; it is such thorough *novel slang*, and so old that I daresay Adam met with it in the first novel he opened."—" We think you had better not leave England. Let the Portmans go to Ireland ; but as you know nothing of the manners there, you had better not go with them. You will be in danger of giving false representations. Stick to Bath and the Foresters. There you will be quite at home."

Anna's schoolboy half-brother, it would appear, produced some amusing tales ; and his little sister Caroline wrote several tragedies, in which she considered that *all* the characters had to be killed off in the last act. Though much hurt by the grown-ups' laughter over these naive horrors, she persevered with story-writing ; and Jane's playful letters to her about her attempts are not without their serious critical implications.

Is it not a privilege and a delight to hear Jane Austen " talking to us almost as fast as she can " ?

R. BRIMLEY JOHNSON.

THE LETTERS OF JANE AUSTEN,

JANE AUSTEN, 1775-1817

The chief persons mentioned in the letters are Jane Austen's parents : The Rev. GEORGE AUSTEN, 1731-1805, and his wife, formerly CASSANDRA LEIGH, 1739-1827 ; and their children,

JAMES, 1765-1819, who married first, ANNE MATTHEW ; second, MARY LLOYD.

EDWARD, 1767-1852, who took the name of Knight, with the estates left to him by his father's cousin and patron, THOMAS KNIGHT, and married ELIZABETH BRIDGES.

HENRY, 1771-1850, who married first, ELIZA DE FEUILLIDE, widow-daughter of his aunt Mrs. Hancock ; second, ELEANOR JACKSON.

CASSANDRA, 1773-1845.

FRANK, 1774-1865, Admiral of the Fleet, who married first, MARY GIBSON, and second, MARTHA LLOYD, sister of Mrs. James.

CHARLES, 1779-1852, who married first, FANNY, and second, HARRIET, PALMER.

Her nephews and nieces :

(1) Children of JAMES.

In first family, ANNA, who wrote novels and married BEN LEFROY. In second, EDWARD, afterwards EDWARD AUSTEN-LEIGH, who wrote her *Memoir*. CAROLINE, the child of

about twelve, to whom a few of her last letters were written.

(2) Children of EDWARD.

FANNY, who married Sir E. KNATCHBULL, Bart., and became the mother of LORD BRABOURNE, EDWARD, GEORGE, and others, two of whom married daughters of JOHN PORTAL.

Other relatives and friends :

Mr. LEIGH PERROT, of Bath (Mrs. Austen's brother), and his wife.

Mrs. COOPER (Jane, sister of Mrs. AUSTEN), her husband Dr. COOPER, daughter JANE (LADY WILLIAMS); son EDWARD with *his* children, EDWARD and ISABELLA.

Mrs. HANCOCK (Mr. AUSTEN's sister), her husband Dr. HANCOCK, and daughter ELIZA, first COUNTESS DE FEUILLIDE, then Mrs. HENRY AUSTEN.

Mrs. COOKE (JANE, daughter of Mrs. AUSTEN's uncle THEOPHILUS, Master of Balliol), her husband, Rev. S. COOKE, children, THEOPHILUS, MARY and GEORGE.

"Madame" LEFROY, great friend; wife of Rev. ISAAC, rector of Ashe; mother of BEN; aunt of TOM and GEORGE.

Mrs. LLOYD, of Ibthorp, great friend; mother of MARY and MARTHA, and ELIZABETH, afterwards Mrs. FOWLE.

PART I
TO CASSANDRA AUSTEN

LETTERS

To Cassandra Austen

STEVENTON, *Thursday (January 9), 1796.*

In the first place I hope you will live twenty-three years longer. Mr. Tom Lefroy's birthday was yesterday, so that you are very near of an age.

After this necessary preamble I shall proceed to inform you that we had an exceeding good ball last night, and that I was very much disappointed at not seeing Charles Fowle of the party, as I had previously heard of his being invited. In addition to our set at the Harwoods' ball, we had the Grants, St. Johns, Lady Rivers, her three daughters and a son, Mr. and Miss Heathcote, Mrs. Lefevre, two Mr. Watkins, Mr. J. Portal, Miss Deanes, two Miss Ledgers, and a tall clergyman who came with them, whose name Mary would never have guessed.

We were so terrible good as to take James in our carriage, though there were three of us before ; but indeed he deserves encouragement for the very great improvement which has lately taken place in his dancing. Miss Heathcote is pretty, but not near so handsome as I expected. Mr. H. began with Elizabeth, and afterwards danced with her

again ; but *they* do not know how to be *particular*. I flatter myself, however, that they will profit by the three successive lessons which I have given them.

You scold me so much in the nice long letter which I have this moment received from you, that I am almost afraid to tell you how my Irish friend and I behaved. Imagine to yourself everything most profligate and shocking in the way of dancing and sitting down together. I *can* expose myself, however, only *once more*, because he leaves the country soon after next Friday, on which day we *are* to have a dance at Ashe after all. He is a very gentlemanlike, good-looking, pleasant young man, I assure you. But as to our having ever met, except at the three last balls, I cannot say much ; for he is so excessively laughed at about me at Ashe, that he is ashamed of coming to Steventon, and ran away when we called on Mrs. Lefroy a few days ago.

We left Warren at Dean Gate, in our way home last night, and he is now on his road to town. He left his love, &c., to you, and I will deliver it when we meet. Henry goes to Harden to-day in his way to his Master's degree. We shall feel the loss of these two most agreeable young men exceedingly, and shall have nothing to console us till the arrival of the Coopers on Tuesday. As they will stay here till the Monday following, perhaps Caroline will go to the Ashe ball with me, though I dare say she will not.

I danced twice with Warren last night, and once with Mr. Charles Watkins, and, to my inexpressible astonishment, I entirely escaped John Lyford.

I was forced to fight hard for it, however. We had a very good supper, and the greenhouse was illuminated in a very elegant manner.

We had a visit yesterday morning from Mr. Benjamin Portal, whose eyes are as handsome as ever. Everybody is extremely anxious for your return, but as you cannot come home by the Ashe ball, I am glad that I have not fed them with false hopes. James danced with Alitheia, and cut up the turkey last night with great perseverance. You say nothing of the silk stockings ; I flatter myself, therefore, that Charles has not purchased any, as I cannot very well afford to pay for them ; all my money is spent in buying white gloves and pink persian. I wish Charles had been at Manydown, because he would have given you some description of my friend, and I think you must be impatient to hear something about him.

Henry is still hankering after the Regulars, and as his project of purchasing the adjutancy of the Oxfordshire is now over, he has got a scheme in his head about getting a lieutenancy and adjutancy in the 86th, a new-raised regiment, which he fancies will be ordered to the Cape of Good Hope. I heartily hope he will, as usual, be disappointed in this scheme. We have trimmed up and given away all the old paper hats of Mamma's manufacture ; I hope you will not regret the loss of yours.

After I had written the above, we received a visit from Mr. Tom Lefroy and his cousin George. The latter is really very well-behaved now ; and as

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for the other, he has but *one* fault, which time will, I trust, entirely remove—it is that his morning coat is a great deal too light. He is a very great admirer of Tom Jones, and therefore wears the same coloured clothes, I imagine, which *he* did when he was wounded.

Sunday.—By not returning till the 19th, you will exactly contrive to miss seeing the Coopers, which I suppose it is your wish to do. We have heard nothing from Charles for some time. One would suppose they must have sailed by this time, as the wind is so favourable. What a funny name Tom has got for his vessel ! But he has no taste in names, as we well know, and I dare say he christened it himself. I am sorry for the Beaches' loss of their little girl, especially as it is the one so much like me.

I condole with Miss M. on her losses and with Eliza on her gains, and am ever yours,

J. A.

To Miss Austen,

Rev. Mr. Fowle's, Kintbury, Newbury.

To Cassandra Austen

STEVENTON, *Saturday (January 14), 1796.*

I have just received yours and Mary's letter, and I thank you both, though their contents might have been more agreeable. I do not at all expect to see you on Tuesday, since matters have fallen out so unpleasantly ; and if you are not able to return till after that day, it will hardly be possible for us to send

for you before Saturday, though for my own part I care so little about the ball that it would be no sacrifice to me to give it up for the sake of seeing you two days earlier. We are extremely sorry for poor Eliza's illness. I trust, however, that she has continued to recover since you wrote, and that you will none of you be the worse for your attendance on her. What a good-for-nothing fellow Charles is to bespeak the stockings ! I hope he will be too hot all the rest of his life for it !

I sent you a letter yesterday to Ibthorp, which I suppose you will not receive at Kintbury. It was not very long or very witty, and therefore if you never receive it, it does not much signify. I wrote principally to tell you that the Coopers were arrived and in good health. The little boy is very like Dr. Cooper, and the little girl is to resemble Jane, they say.

Our party to Ashe to-morrow night will consist of Edward Cooper, James (for a ball is nothing without *him*), Buller, who is now staying with us, and I. I look forward with great impatience to it, as I rather expect to receive an offer from my friend in the course of the evening. I shall refuse him, however, unless he promises to give away his white coat.

I am very much flattered by your commendation of my last letter, for I write only for fame, and without any view to pecuniary emolument.

Edward is gone to spend the day with his friend, John Lyford, and does not return till to-morrow. Anna is now here ; she came up in her chaise to spend the day with her young cousins, but she does

not much take to them or to anything about them, except Caroline's spinning-wheel. I am very glad to find from Mary that Mr. and Mrs. Fowle are pleased with you. I hope you will continue to give satisfaction.

How impertinent you are to write to me about Tom, as if I had not opportunities of hearing from him myself! The *last* letter that I received from him was dated on Friday, 8th, and he told me that if the wind should be favourable on Sunday, which it proved to be, they were to sail from Falmouth on that day. By this time, therefore, they are at Barbadoes, I suppose. The Rivers are still at Manydown, and are to be at Ashe to-morrow. I intended to call on the Miss Biggs yesterday had the weather been tolerable. Caroline, Anna, and I have just been devouring some cold souse, and it would be difficult to say which enjoyed it most.

Tell Mary that I make over Mr. Heartley and all his estate to her for her sole use and benefit in future, and not only him, but all my other admirers into the bargain wherever she can find them, even the kiss which C. Powlett wanted to give me, as I mean to confine myself in future to Mr. Tom Lefroy, for whom I don't care sixpence. Assure her also, as a last and indubitable proof of Warren's indifference to me, that he actually drew that gentleman's picture for me, and delivered it to me without a sigh.

Friday.—At length the day is come on which I am to flirt my last with Tom Lefroy, and when you receive this it will be over. My tears flow as I

write at the melancholy idea. Wm. Chute called here yesterday. I wonder what he means by being so civil. There is a report that Tom is going to be married to a Lichfield lass. John Lyford and his sister bring Edward home to-day, dine with us, and we shall all go together to Ashe. I understand that we are to draw for partners. I shall be extremely impatient to hear from you again, that I may know how Eliza is, and when you are to return.

With best love, &c., I am affectionately yours,

J. AUSTEN.

Miss Austen,

The Rev. Mr. Fowle's, Kintbury, Newbury.

To Cassandra Austen

CORK STREET, *Tuesday morn (August, 1796).*

MY DEAR CASSANDRA,

Here I am once more in this scene of dissipation and vice, and I begin already to find my morals corrupted. We reached Staines yesterday, I do not (know) when, without suffering so much from the heat as I had hoped to do. We set off again this morning at seven o'clock, and had a very pleasant drive, as the morning was cloudy and perfectly cool. I came all the way in the chaise from Hertford Bridge.

Edward and Frank are both gone out to seek their fortunes; the latter is to return soon and help us seek ours. The former we shall never see again. We are to be at Astley's to-night, which I am glad of. Edward has heard from Henry this morning. He

has not been at the races at all, unless his driving Miss Pearson over to Rowling one day can be so called. We shall find him there on Thursday.

I hope you are all alive after our melancholy parting yesterday, and that you pursued your intended avocation with success. God bless you ! I must leave off, for we are going out.

Yours very affectionately,

J. AUSTEN.

Everybody's love.

To Cassandra Austen

ROWLING, *Thursday (September 1), 1796.*

MY DEAREST CASSANDRA,

The letter which I have this moment received from you has diverted me beyond moderation. I could die of laughter at it, as they used to say at school. You are indeed the finest comic writer of the present age.

Since I wrote last, we have been very near returning to Steventon so early as next week. Such, for a day or two, was our dear brother Henry's scheme, but at present matters are restored, not to what they were, for my absence seems likely to be lengthened still farther. I am sorry for it, but what can I do ?

Henry leaves us to-morrow for Yarmouth, as he wishes very much to consult his physician there, on whom he has great reliance. He is better than he was when he first came, though still by no means

well. According to his present plan, he will not return here till about the 23rd, and bring with him, if he can, leave of absence for three weeks, as he wants very much to have some shooting at Godmersham, whither Edward and Elizabeth are to remove very early in October. If this scheme holds, I shall hardly be at Steventon before the middle of that month ; but if you cannot do without me, I could return, I suppose, with Frank if he ever goes back. He enjoys himself here very much, for he has just learnt to turn, and is so delighted with the employment, that he is at it all day long.

I am sorry that you found such a conciseness in the strains of my first letter. I must endeavour to make you amends for it, when we meet, by some elaborate details, which I shall shortly begin composing.

I have had my new gown made up, and it really makes a very superb surplice. I am sorry to say that my new coloured gown is very much washed out, though I charged everybody to take great care of it. I hope yours is so too. Our men had but indifferent weather for their visit to Godmersham, for it rained great part of the way there and all the way back. They found Mrs. Knight remarkably well and in very good spirits. It is imagined that she will shortly be married again. I have taken little George once in my arms since I have been here, which I thought very kind. I have told Fanny about the bead of her necklace, and she wants very much to know where you found it.

To-morrow I shall be just like Camilla¹ in Mr. Dubster's summer-house ; for my Lionel will have taken away the ladder by which I came here, or at least by which I intended to get away, and here I must stay till his return. My situation, however, is somewhat preferable to hers, for I am very happy here, though I should be glad to get home by the end of the month. I have no idea that Miss Pearson will return with me.

What a fine fellow Charles is, to deceive us into writing two letters to him at Cork ! I admire his ingenuity extremely, especially as he is so great a gainer by it.

Mr. and Mrs. Cage and Mr. and Mrs. Bridges dined with us yesterday. Fanny seemed as glad to see me as anybody, and inquired very much after you, whom she supposed to be making your wedding-clothes. She is as handsome as ever, and somewhat fatter. We had a very pleasant day, and some *liqueurs* in the evening. Louisa's figure is very much improved ; she is as stout again as she was. Her face, from what I could see of it one evening, appeared not at all altered. She and the gentlemen walked up here on Monday night—she came in the morning with the Cages from Hythe.

Lady Hales, with her two youngest daughters, have been to see us. Caroline is not grown at all coarser than she was, nor Harriet at all more delicate. I am glad to hear so good an account of Mr. Charde, and only fear that my long absence may occasion his

¹ *Camilla*, the novel by Fanny Burney.

relapse. I practise every day as much as I can—I wish it were more for his sake. I have heard nothing of Mary Robinson since I have been (here). I expect to be well scolded for daring to doubt, whenever the subject is mentioned.

Frank has turned a very nice little butter-churn for Fanny. I do not believe that any of the party were aware of the valuables they had left behind; nor can I hear anything of Anna's gloves. Indeed I have not inquired at all about them hitherto.

We are very busy making Edward's shirts, and I am proud to say that I am the neatest worker of the party. They say that there are a prodigious number of birds hereabouts this year, so that perhaps *I* may kill a few. I am glad to hear so good an account of Mr. Limprey and J. Lovett. I know nothing of my mother's handkerchief, but I dare say I shall find it soon.

I am very affectionately yours,

JANE.

Miss Austen, Steventon, Overton, Hants.

To Cassandra Austen

STEVENTON, *Saturday* (October 27), 1798.

MY DEAR CASSANDRA,

Your letter was a most agreeable surprise to me to-day, and I have taken a long sheet of paper to show my gratitude.

We arrived here yesterday between four and five, but I cannot send you quite so triumphant an

account of our last day's journey as of the first and second. Soon after I had finished my letter from Staines, my mother began to suffer from the exercise or fatigue of travelling, and she was a good deal indisposed. She had not a very good night at Staines, but bore her journey better than I had expected, and at Basingstoke, where we stopped more than half an hour, received much comfort from a mess of broth and the sight of Mr. Lyford, who recommended her to take twelve drops of laudanum when she went to bed as a composer, which she accordingly did.

James called on us just as we were going to tea, and my mother was well enough to talk very cheerfully to him before she went to bed. James seems to have taken to his old trick of coming to Steventon in spite of Mary's reproaches, for he was here before breakfast and is now paying us a second visit. They were to have dined here to-day, but the weather is too bad. I have had the pleasure of hearing that Martha is with them. James fetched her from Ibthorp on Thursday, and she will stay with them till she removes to Kintbury.

We met with no adventures at all in our journey yesterday, except that our trunk had once nearly slipped off, and we were obliged to stop at Hartley to have our wheels greased.

Whilst my mother and Mr. Lyford were together I went to Mrs. Ryder's and bought what I intended to buy, but not in much perfection. There were no narrow braces for children and scarcely any notting

silk : but Miss Wood, as usual, is going to town very soon, and will lay in a fresh stock. I gave 2s. 3d. a yard for my flannel, and I fancy it is not very good, but it is so disgraceful and contemptible an article in itself that its being comparatively good or bad is of little importance. I bought some Japan ink likewise, and next week shall begin my operations on my hat, on which you know my principal hopes of happiness depend.

I am very grand indeed ; I had the dignity of dropping out my mother's laudanum last night. I carry about the keys of the wine and closet, and twice since I began this letter have had orders to give in the kitchen. Our dinner was very good yesterday, and the chicken boiled perfectly tender ; therefore I shall not be obliged to dismiss Nanny on that account.

Almost everything was unpacked and put away last night. Nanny chose to do it, and I was not sorry to be busy. I have unpacked the gloves and placed yours in your drawer. Their colour is light and pretty, and I believe exactly what we fixed on.

Your letter was chaperoned here by one from Mrs. Cooke, in which she says that " Battleridge " is not to come out before January, and she is so little satisfied with Cawthorn's dilatoriness that she never means to employ him again.

Mrs. Hall, of Sherborne, was brought to bed yesterday of a dead child, some weeks before she expected, owing to a fright. I suppose she happened unawares to look at her husband.

There has been a great deal of rain here for this last fortnight, much more than in Kent, and indeed we found the roads all the way from Staines most disgracefully dirty. Steventon lane has its full share of it, and I don't know when I shall be able to get to Deane.

I hear that Martha is in better looks and spirits than she has enjoyed for a long time, and I flatter myself she will now be able to jest openly about Mr. W.

The spectacles which Molly found are my mother's, the scissors my father's. We are very glad to hear such a good account of your patients, little and great. My dear itty Dordy's remembrance of me is very pleasing to me—foolishly pleasing, because I know it will be over so soon. My attachment to him will be more durable. I shall think with tenderness and delight on his beautiful and smiling countenance and interesting manner until a few years have turned him into an ungovernable, ungracious fellow.

The books from Winton are all unpacked and put away; the binding has compressed them most conveniently, and there is now very good room in the bookcase for all that we wish to have there. I believe the servants were very glad to see us. Nanny was, I am sure. She confesses that it was very dull, and yet she had her child with her till last Sunday. I understand that there are some grapes left, but I believe not many; they must be gathered as soon as possible, or this rain will entirely rot them.

I am quite angry with myself for not writing closer ; why is my alphabet so much more sprawly than yours ? Dame Tilbury's daughter has lain in. Shall I give her any of your baby clothes ? The laceman was here only a few days ago. How unfortunate for both of us that he came so soon ! Dame Bushell washes for us only one week more, as Sukey has got a place. John Steevens' wife undertakes our purification. She does not look as if anything she touched would ever be clean, but who knows ? We do not seem likely to have any other maidservant at present, but Dame Staples will supply the place of one. Mary has hired a young girl from Ashe who has never been out to service to be her scrub, but James fears her not being strong enough for the place.

Earle Harwood has been to Deane lately, as I think Mary wrote us word, and his family then told him that they would receive his wife, if she continued to behave well for another year. He was very grateful, as well he might ; their behaviour throughout the whole affair has been particularly kind. Earle and his wife live in the most private manner imaginable at Portsmouth, without keeping a servant of any kind. What a prodigious innate love of virtue she must have, to marry under such circumstances !

It is now Saturday evening, but I wrote the chief of this in the morning. My mother has not been down at all to-day ; the laudanum made her sleep a good deal, and upon the whole I think she is better.

My father and I dined by ourselves. How strange ! He and John Bond are now very happy together, for I have just heard the heavy step of the latter along the passage.

James Digweed called to-day, and I gave him his brother's deputation. Charles Harwood, too, has just called to ask how we are, in his way from Dummer, whither he has been conveying Miss Garrett, who is going to return to her former residence in Kent. I *will* leave off, or I shall not have room to add a word to-morrow.

Sunday.—My mother has had a very good night, and feels much better to-day.

I have received my Aunt's letter, and thank you for your scrap. I will write to Charles soon. Pray give Fanny and Edward a kiss from me, and ask George if he has got a new song for me. 'Tis really very kind of my Aunt to ask us to Bath again ; a kindness that deserves a better return than to profit by it.

Yours ever,
J. A.

Miss Austen,

Godmersham Park, Faversham, Kent.

To Cassandra Austen

Saturday, November 17, 1798.

MY DEAR CASSANDRA,

If you paid any attention to the conclusion of my last letter, you will be satisfied, before you receive this, that my mother has had no relapse, and that

Miss Debary comes. The former continues to recover, and though she does not gain strength very rapidly, my expectations are humble enough not to outstride her improvements. She was able to sit up nearly eight hours yesterday, and to-day I hope we shall do as much. . . . So much for my patient—now for myself.

Mrs. Lefroy did come last Wednesday, and the Harwoods came likewise, but very considerably paid their visit before Mrs. Lefroy's arrival, with whom, in spite of interruptions both from my father and James, I was enough alone to hear all that was interesting, which you will easily credit when I tell you that of her nephew she said nothing at all, and of her friend very little. She did not once mention the name of the former to *me*, and I was too proud to make any inquiries ; but on my father's afterwards asking where he was, I learnt that he was gone back to London in his way to Ireland, where he is called to the Bar and means to practise.

She showed me a letter which she had received from her friend a few weeks ago (in answer to one written by her to recommend a nephew of Mrs. Russell to his notice at Cambridge), towards the end of which was a sentence to this effect : " I am very sorry to hear of Mrs. Austen's illness. It would give me particular pleasure to have an opportunity of improving my acquaintance with that family—with a hope of creating to myself a nearer interest. But at present I cannot indulge any expectation of it." This is rational enough ; there is less love and more

sense in it than sometimes appeared before, and I am very well satisfied. It will all go on exceedingly well, and decline away in a very reasonable manner. There seems no likelihood of his coming into Hampshire this Christmas, and it is therefore most probable that our indifference will soon be mutual, unless his regard, which appeared to spring from knowing nothing of me at first, is best supported by never seeing me.

Mrs. Lefroy made no remarks on the letter, nor did she indeed say anything about him as relative to me. Perhaps she thinks she has said too much already. She saw a great deal of the Mapletons while she was in Bath. Christian is still in a very bad state of health, consumptive, and not likely to recover.

Mrs. Portman is not much admired in Dorsetshire ; the good-natured world, as usual, extolled her beauty so highly, that all the neighbourhood have had the pleasure of being disappointed.

My mother desires me to tell you that I am a very good housekeeper, which I have no reluctance in doing, because I really think it my peculiar excellence, and for this reason—I always take care to provide such things as please my own appetite, which I consider as the chief merit in housekeeping. I have had some ragout veal, and I mean to have some haricot mutton to-morrow. We are to kill a pig soon.

There is to be a ball at Basingstoke next Thursday. Our assemblies have very kindly declined

ever since we laid down the carriage, so that dis-convenience and dis-inclination to go have kept pace together.

My father's affection for Miss Cuthbert is as lively as ever, and he begs that you will not neglect to send him intelligence of her or her brother, whenever you have any to send. I am likewise to tell you that one of his Leicestershire sheep, sold to the butcher last week, weighed 27 lb. and $\frac{1}{4}$ per quarter.

I went to Deane with my father two days ago to see Mary, who is still plagued with the rheumatism, which she would be very glad to get rid of, and still more glad to get rid of her child, of whom she is heartily tired. Her nurse is come, and has no particular charm either of person or manner; but as all the Hurstbourne world pronounce her to be the best nurse that ever was, Mary expects her attachment to increase.

What fine weather this is! Not very becoming perhaps early in the morning, but very pleasant out of doors at noon, and very wholesome—at least everybody fancies so, and imagination is everything. To Edward, however, I really think dry weather of importance. I have not taken to fires yet.

I believe I never told you that Mrs. Coulthard and Anne, late of Manydown, are both dead, and both died in childbed. We have not regaled Mary with this news. Harry St. John is in Orders, has done duty at Ashe, and performs very well.

I am very fond of experimental housekeeping, such as having an ox-cheek now and then ; I shall have one next week, and I mean to have some little dumplings put into it, that I may fancy myself at Godmersham.

I hope George was pleased with my designs. Perhaps they would have suited him as well had they been less elaborately finished ; but an artist cannot do anything slovenly. I suppose baby grows and improves.

Sunday.—I have just received a note from James to say that Mary was brought to bed last night, at eleven o'clock, of a fine little boy, and that everything is going on very well. My mother had desired to know nothing of it before it should be all over, and we were clever enough to prevent her having any suspicion of it, though Jenny, who had been left here by her mistress, was sent for home. . . .

I called yesterday on Betty Londe, who inquired particularly after you, and said she seemed to miss you very much, because you used to call in upon her very often. This was an oblique reproach at me, which I am sorry to have merited, and from which I will profit. I shall send George another picture when I write next, which I suppose will be soon, on Mary's account. My mother continues well.

Yours,

J. A.

Miss Austen, Godmersham.

*To Cassandra Austen*STEVENTON, *December 1, 1798.*

MY DEAR CASSANDRA,

I am so good as to write to you again thus speedily, to let you know that I have just heard from Frank. He was at Cadiz, alive and well, on October 19, and had then very lately received a letter from you, written as long ago as when the "London" was at St. Helen's. But his *rally* latest intelligence of us was in one from me of September 1, which I sent soon after we got to Godmersham. He had written a packet full for his dearest friends in England, early in October, to go by the "Excellent"; but the "Excellent" was not sailed, nor likely to sail, when he despatched this to me. It comprehended letters for both of us, for Lord Spencer, Mr. Daysh, and the East India Directors. Lord St. Vincent had left the fleet when he wrote, and was gone to Gibraltar, it was said to superintend the fitting out of a private expedition from thence against some of the enemies' ports; Minorca or Malta were conjectured to be the objects.

Frank writes in good spirits, but says that our correspondence cannot be so easily carried on in future as it has been, as the communication between Cadiz and Lisbon is less frequent than formerly. You and my mother, therefore, must not alarm yourselves at the long intervals that may divide his letters. I address this advice to you two as being the most tender-hearted of the family.

My mother made her *entrée* into the dressing-room through crowds of admiring spectators yesterday afternoon, and we all drank tea together for the first time these five weeks. She has had a tolerable night, and bids fair for a continuance in the same brilliant course of action to-day. . . .

Mr. Lyford was here yesterday ; he came while we were at dinner, and partook of our elegant entertainment. I was not ashamed at asking him to sit down to table, for we had some pease-soup, a sparerib, and a pudding. He wants my mother to look yellow and to throw out a rash, but she will do neither.

I was at Deane yesterday morning. Mary was very well, but does not gain bodily strength very fast. When I saw her so stout on the third and sixth days, I expected to have seen her as well as ever by the end of a fortnight.

James went to Ibthorp yesterday to see his mother and child. Letty is with Mary at present, of course exceedingly happy, and in raptures with the child. Mary does not manage matters in such a way as to make me want to lay in myself. She is not tidy enough in her appearance, she has no dressing-gown to sit up in ; her curtains are all too thin, and things are not in that comfort and style about her which are necessary to make such a situation an enviable one. Elizabeth was really a pretty object with her nice clean cap put on so tidily and her dress so uniformly white and orderly. We live entirely in the dressing-room now, which I like very

*To Cassandra Austen*STEVENTON, *Monday night (December 24), 1798.*

MY DEAR CASSANDRA,

I have got some pleasant news for you which I am eager to communicate, and therefore begin my letter sooner, though I shall not *send* it sooner than usual.

Admiral Gambier, in reply to my father's application, writes as follows :—" As it is usual to keep young officers in small vessels, it being most proper on account of their inexperience, and it being also a situation where they are more in the way of learning their duty, your son has been continued in the ' Scorpion ' ; but I have mentioned to the Board of Admiralty his wish to be in a frigate, and when a proper opportunity offers and it is judged that he has taken his turn in a small ship, I hope he will be removed. With regard to your son now in the ' London ' I am glad I can give you the assurance that his promotion is likely to take place very soon, as Lord Spencer has been so good as to say he would include him in an arrangement that he proposes making in a short time relative to some promotions in that quarter."

There ! I may now finish my letter and go and hang myself, for I am sure I can neither write nor do anything which will not appear insipid to you after this. *Now* I really think he will soon be made, and only wish we could communicate our foreknowledge of the event to him whom it principally

concerns. My father has written to Daysh to desire that he will inform us, if he can, when the commission is sent. Your chief wish is now ready to be accomplished ; and could Lord Spencer give happiness to Martha at the same time, what a joyful heart he would make of yours !

I have sent the same extract of the sweets of Gambier to Charles, who, poor fellow, though he sinks into nothing but an humble attendant on the hero of the piece, will, I hope, be contented with the prospect held out to him. By what the Admiral says, it appears as if he had been designedly kept in the " Scorpion." But I will not torment myself with conjectures and suppositions ; facts shall satisfy me.

Frank had not heard from any of us for ten weeks, when he wrote to me on November 12 in consequence of Lord St. Vincent being removed to Gibraltar. When his commission is sent, however, it will not be so long on its road as our letters, because all the Government despatches are forwarded by land to his lordship from Lisbon with great regularity.

I returned from Manydown this morning, and found my mother certainly in no respect worse than when I left her. She does not like the cold weather, but that we cannot help. I spent my time very quietly and very pleasantly with Catherine. Miss Blackford is agreeable enough. I do not want people to be very agreeable, as it saves me the trouble of liking them a great deal. I found only

Catherine and her when I got to Manydown on Thursday. We dined together and went together to Worting to seek the protection of Mrs. Clarke, with whom were Lady Mildmay, her eldest son, and a Mr. and Mrs. Hoare.

Our ball was very thin, but by no means unpleasant. There were thirty-one people, and only eleven ladies out of the number, and but five single women in the room. Of the gentlemen present you may have some idea from the list of my partners ---Mr. Wood, G. Lefroy, Rice, a Mr. Butcher (belonging to the Temples, a sailor, and not of the 11th Light Dragoons), Mr. Temple (not the horrid one of all), Mr. Wm. Orde (cousin to the Kingsclere man), Mr. John Harwood, and Mr. Calland, who appeared as usual with his hat in his hand, and stood every now and then behind Catherine and me to be talked to and abused for not dancing. We teased him, however, into it at last. I was very glad to see him again after so long a separation, and he was altogether rather the genius and flirt of the evening. He inquired after you.

There were twenty dances, and I danced them all, and without any fatigue. I was glad to find myself capable of dancing so much, and with so much satisfaction as I did; from my slender enjoyment of the Ashford balls (as assemblies for dancing) I had not thought myself equal to it, but in cold weather and with few couples I fancy I could just as well dance for a week together as for half an hour. My black cap was openly admired

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by Mrs. Lefroy, and secretly I imagine by everybody else in the room.

Tuesday.—I thank you for your long letter, which I will endeavour to deserve by writing the rest of this as closely as possible. I am full of joy at much of your information ; that you should have been to a ball, and have danced at it, and supped with the Prince, and that you should meditate the purchase of a new muslin gown, are delightful circumstances. I am determined to buy a handsome one whenever I can, and I am so tired and ashamed of half my present stock, that I even blush at the sight of the wardrobe which contains them. But I will not be much longer libelled by the possession of my coarse spot ; I shall turn it into a petticoat very soon. I wish you a merry Christmas, but *no* compliments of the season.

Poor Edward ! It is very hard that he, who has everything else in the world that he can wish for, should not have good health too. But I hope with the assistance of stomach complaints, faintnesses, and sicknesses, he will soon be restored to that blessing likewise. If his nervous complaint proceeded from a suppression of something that ought to be thrown out, which does not seem unlikely, the first of these disorders may really be a remedy, and I sincerely wish it may, for I know no one more deserving of happiness without alloy than Edward is.

I cannot determine what to do about my new gown ; I wish such things were to be bought ready-made. I have some hopes of meeting Martha at

the christening at Deane next Tuesday, and shall see what she can do for me. I want to have something suggested which will give me no trouble of thought or direction.

Again I return to my joy that you danced at Ashford, and that you supped with the Prince. I can perfectly comprehend Mrs. Cage's distress and perplexity. She has all those kind of foolish and incomprehensible feelings which would make her fancy herself uncomfortable in such a party. I love her, however, in spite of all her nonsense. Pray give "t'other Miss Austen's" compliments to Edward Bridges when you see him again.

I insist upon your persevering in your intention of buying a new gown ; I am sure you must want one, and as you will have 5*l.* due in a week's time, I am certain you may afford it very well, and if you think you cannot, I will give you the body-lining.

Of my charities to the poor since I came home you shall have a faithful account. I have given a pair of worsted stockings to Mary Hutchins, Dame Kew, Mary Steevens, and Dame Staples ; a shift to Hannah Staples, and a shawl to Betty Dawkins ; amounting in all to about half a guinea. But I have no reason to suppose that the *Battys* would accept of anything, because I have not made them the offer.

I am glad to hear such a good account of Harriet Bridges ; she goes on now as young ladies of seventeen ought to do, admired and admiring, in a much more rational way than her three elder sisters, who had so little of that kind of youth. I dare say she

fancies Major Elkington as agreeable as Warren, and if she can think so, it is very well.

I was to have dined at Deane to-day, but the weather is so cold that I am not sorry to be kept at home by the appearance of snow. We are to have company to dinner on Friday : the three Digweeds and James. We shall be a nice silent party, I suppose. Seize upon the scissors as soon as you possibly can on the receipt of this. I only fear your being too late to secure the prize.

The Lords of the Admiralty will have enough of our applications at present, for I hear from Charles that he has written to Lord Spencer himself to be removed. I am afraid his Serene Highness will be in a passion, and order some of our heads to be cut off.

My mother wants to know whether Edward has ever made the hen-house which they planned together. I am rejoiced to hear from Martha that they certainly continue at Ibthorp, and I have just heard that I am sure of meeting Martha at the christening.

You deserve a longer letter than this ; but it is my unhappy fate seldom to treat people so well as they deserve. . . . God bless you !

Yours affectionately,

JANE AUSTEN.

Wednesday.—The snow came to nothing yesterday, so I *did* go to Deane, and returned home at nine o'clock at night in the little carriage, and without being very cold.

Miss Austen,

Godmersham Park, Faversham, Kent.

*To Cassandra Austen*13, QUEEN'S SQUARE, *Sunday (June 2), 1799.*

MY DEAR CASSANDRA,

I am obliged to you for two letters, one from yourself and the other from Mary, for of the latter I knew nothing till on the receipt of yours yesterday, when the pigeon-basket was examined, and I received my due. As I have written to her since the time which ought to have brought me hers, I suppose she will consider herself, as I choose to consider her, still in my debt.

I will lay out all the little judgment I have in endeavouring to get such stockings for Anna as she will approve ; but I do not know that I shall execute Martha's commission at all, for I am not fond of ordering shoes ; and, at any rate, they shall all have flat heels.

What must I tell you of Edward ? Truth or falsehood ? I will try the former, and you may choose for yourself another time. He was better yesterday than he had been for two or three days before—about as well as while he was at Steventon. He drinks at the Hetling Pump, is to bathe tomorrow, and try electricity on Tuesday. He proposed the latter himself to Dr. Fellowes, who made no objection to it, but I fancy we are all unanimous in expecting no advantage from it. At present I have no great notion of our staying here beyond the month.

I heard from Charles last week ; they were to sail on Wednesday.

My mother seems remarkably well. My uncle overwalked himself at first, and can now only travel in a chair, but is otherwise very well.

My cloak is come home. I like it very much, and can now exclaim with delight, like J. Bond at hay-harvest, "This is what I have been looking for these three years." I saw some gauzes in a shop in Bath Street yesterday at only 4*d.* a yard, but they were not so good or so pretty as mine. Flowers are very much worn, and fruit is still more the thing. Elizabeth has a bunch of strawberries, and I have seen grapes, cherries, plums, and apricots. There are likewise almonds and raisins, French plums, and tamarinds at the grocers', but I have never seen any of them in hats. A plum or greengage would cost three shillings; cherries and grapes about five, I believe, but this is at some of the dearest shops. My aunt has told me of a very cheap one, near Walcot Church, to which I shall go in quest of something for you. I have never seen an old woman at the pump-room.

Elizabeth has given me a hat, and it is not only a pretty hat, but a pretty *style* of hat too. It is something like Eliza's, only, instead of being all straw, half of it is narrow purple ribbon. I flatter myself, however, that you can understand very little of it from this description. Heaven forbid that I should ever offer such encouragement to explanations as to give a clear one on any occasion myself! But I must write no more of this. . . .

I spent Friday evening with the Mapletons, and

was obliged to submit to being pleased in spite of my inclination. We took a very charming walk from six to eight up Beacon Hill, and across some fields, to the village of Charlecombe, which is sweetly situated in a little green valley, as a village with such a name ought to be. Marianne is sensible and intelligent, and even Jane, considering how fair she is, is not unpleasant. We had a Miss North and a Mr. Gould of our party ; the latter walked home with me after tea. He is a very young man, just entered Oxford, wears spectacles, and has heard that “ *Evelina* ” was written by Dr. Johnson.

I am afraid I cannot undertake to carry Martha’s shoes home, for, though we had plenty of room in our trunks when we came, we shall have many more things to take back, and I must allow besides for *my* packing.

There is to be a grand gala on Tuesday evening in Sydney Gardens, a concert, with illuminations and fireworks. To the latter Elizabeth and I look forward with pleasure, and even the concert will have more than its usual charm for me, as the gardens are large enough for me to get pretty well beyond the reach of its sound. In the morning Lady Willoughby is to present the colours to some corps, or Yeomanry, or other, in the Crescent, and that such festivities may have a proper commencement, we think of going to . . .

I am quite pleased with Martha and Mrs. Lefroy for wanting the pattern of our caps, but I am not so well pleased with your giving it to them. Some

wish, some prevailing wish, is necessary to the animation of everybody's mind, and in gratifying this you leave them to form some other which will not probably be half so innocent. I shall not forget to write to Frank. Duty and love, &c.

Yours affectionately,

JANE.

My uncle is quite surprised at my hearing from you so often ; but as long as we can keep the frequency of our correspondence from Martha's uncle we will not fear our own.

Miss Austen, Steventon.

To Cassandra Austen

STEVENTON, *Thursday (November 20), 1800.*

MY DEAR CASSANDRA,

Your letter took me quite by surprise this morning ; you are very welcome, however, and I am very much obliged to you. I believe I drank too much wine last night at Hurstbourne ; I know not how else to account for the shaking of my hand to-day. You will kindly make allowance therefore for any indistinctness of writing, by attributing it to this venial error.

Naughty Charles did not come on Tuesday, but good Charles came yesterday morning. About two o'clock he walked in on a Gosport hack. His feeling equal to such a fatigue is a good sign, and his feeling no fatigue in it a still better. He walked down to

Deane to dinner ; he danced the whole evening, and to-day is no more tired than a gentleman ought to be.

Your desiring to hear from me on Sunday will, perhaps, bring you a more particular account of the ball than you may care for, because one is prone to think much more of such things the morning after they happen, than when time has entirely driven them out of one's recollection.

It was a pleasant evening ; Charles found it remarkably so, but I cannot tell why, unless the absence of Miss Terry, towards whom his conscience reproaches him with being now perfectly indifferent, was a relief to him. There were only twelve dances, of which I danced nine, and was merely prevented from dancing the rest by the want of a partner. We began at ten, supped at one, and were at Deane before five. There were but fifty people in the room ; very few families indeed from our side of the county, and not many more from the other. My partners were the two St. Johns, Hooper, Holder, and very prodigious Mr. Mathew, with whom I called the last, and whom I liked the best of my little stock.

There were very few beauties, and such as there were were not very handsome. Miss Iremonger did not look well, and Mrs. Blount was the only one much admired. She appeared exactly as she did in September, with the same broad face, diamond bandeau, white shoes, pink husband, and fat neck. The two Miss Coxes were there : I traced in one

the remains of the vulgar, broad-featured girl who danced at Enham eight years ago ; the other is refined into a nice, composed-looking girl, like Catherine Bigg. I looked at Sir Thomas Champneys and thought of poor Rosalie ; I looked at his daughter, and thought her a queer animal with a white neck. Mrs. Warren, I was constrained to think a very fine young woman, which I much regret. She danced away with great activity. Her husband is ugly enough, uglier even than his cousin John ; but he does not look so *very* old. The Miss Maitlands are both prettyish, very like Anne, with brown skins, large dark eyes, and a good deal of nose. The General has got the gout, and Mrs. Maitland the jaundice. Miss Debary, Susan, and Sally, all in black, but without any statues, made their appearance, and I was as civil to them as circumstances would allow me.

They told me nothing new of Martha. I mean to go to her on Thursday, unless Charles should determine on coming over again with his friend Shipley for the Basingstoke ball, in which case I shall not go till Friday. I shall write to you again, however, before I set off, and I shall hope to hear from you in the meantime. If I do not stay for the ball, I would not on any account do so uncivil a thing by the neighbourhood as to set off at that very time for another place, and shall therefore make a point of not being later than Thursday *morning*.

Mary said that I looked very well last night. I wore my aunt's gown and handkerchief, and my

been over to Ibthorp by this time to inquire particularly after Mrs. Lloyd's health, and forestall whatever intelligence of the sale I might attempt to give ; sixty-one guineas and a-half for the three cows gives one some support under the blow of only eleven guineas for the tables. Eight for my pianoforte is about what I really expected to get ; I am more anxious to know the amount of my books, especially as they are said to have sold well.

My adventures since I wrote last have not been numerous ; but such as they are, they are much at your service.

We met not a creature at Mrs. Lillingstone's, and yet were not so very stupid, as I expected, which I attribute to my wearing my new bonnet and being in good looks. On Sunday we went to church twice, and after evening service walked a little in the Crescent fields, but found it too cold to stay long.

Yesterday morning we looked into a house in Seymour Street, which there is reason to suppose will soon be empty ; and as we are assured from many quarters that no inconvenience from the river is felt in those buildings, we are at liberty to fix in them if we can. But this house was not inviting ; the largest room downstairs was not much more than fourteen feet square, with a western aspect.

In the evening, I hope you honoured my toilette and ball with a thought ; I dressed myself as well as I could, and had all my finery much admired at home. By nine o'clock my uncle, aunt, and I

entered the rooms, and linked Miss Winstone on to us. Before tea it was rather a dull affair ; but then the before tea did not last long, for there was only one dance, danced by four couple. Think of four couple, surrounded by about an hundred people, dancing in the Upper Rooms at Bath.

After tea we *cheered up* ; the breaking up of private parties sent some scores more to the ball, and though it was shockingly and inhumanly thin for this place, there were people enough, I suppose, to have made five or six very pretty Basingstoke assemblies.

I then got Mr. Evelyn to talk to, and Miss T. to look at ; and I am proud to say that though repeatedly assured that another in the same party was the *She*, I fixed upon the right one from the first. A resemblance to Mrs. L. was my guide. She is not so pretty as I expected ; her face has the same defect of baldness as her sister's, and her features not so handsome ; she was highly rouged, and looked rather quietly and contentedly silly than anything else.

Mrs. B. and two young women were of the same party, except when Mrs. B. thought herself obliged to leave them to run round the room after her drunken husband. His avoidance, and her pursuit, with the probable intoxication of both, was an amusing scene.

The Evelyns returned our visit on Saturday ; we were very happy to meet, and all that ; they are going to-morrow into Gloucestershire to the Dolphins

for ten days. Our acquaintance, Mr. Woodward, is just married to a Miss Rowe, a young lady rich in money and music.

I thank you for your Sunday's letter, it is very long and very agreeable. I fancy you know many more particulars of our sale than we do ; we have heard the price of nothing but the cows, bacon, hay, hops, tables, and my father's chest of drawers and study table. Mary is more minute in her account of their own gains than in ours ; probably being better informed in them. I will attend to Mrs. Lloyd's commission and to her abhorrence of musk when I write again.

I have bestowed three calls of inquiry on the Mapletons, and I fancy very beneficial ones to Marianne, as I am always told that she is better. I have not seen any of them. Her complaint is a bilious fever.

I like my dark gown very much indeed, colour, make, and everything ; I mean to have my new white one made up now, in case we should go to the rooms again next Monday, which is to be really the last time.

Wednesday.—Another stupid party last night ; perhaps if larger they might be less intolerable, but here there were only just enough to make one card-table, with six people to look on and talk nonsense to each other. Lady Fust, Mrs. Busby, and a Mrs. Owen sat down with my uncle to whist, within five minutes after the three old *Toughs* came in, and there they sat, with only the exchange of

Adm. Stanhope for my uncle, till their chairs were announced.

I cannot anyhow continue to find people agreeable ; I respect Mrs. Chamberlayne for doing her hair well, but cannot feel a more tender sentiment. Miss Langley is like any other short girl, with a broad nose and wide mouth, fashionable dress and exposed bosom. Adm. Stanhope is a gentleman-like man, but then his legs are too short and his tail too long. Mrs. Stanhope could not come ; I fancy she had a private appointment with Mr. Chamberlayne, whom I wished to see more than all the rest.

My uncle has quite got the better of his lameness, or at least his walking with a stick is the only remains of it. He and I are soon to take the long-planned walk to the Cassoon, and on Friday we are all to accompany Mrs. Chamberlayne and Miss Langley to Weston.

My mother had a letter yesterday from my father ; it seems as if the W. Kent Scheme was entirely given up. He talks of spending a fortnight at Godmersham, and then returning to town.

Yours ever,

J. A.

Excepting a slight cold, my mother is very well ; she has been quite free from feverish or bilious complaints since her arrival here.

Miss Austen,

Mrs. Lloyd's, Hurstbourn Tarrant, Andover.

*To Cassandra Austen*CASTLE SQUARE (*October 13*), 1808.

MY DEAREST CASSANDRA,

I have received your letter, and with most melancholy anxiety was it expected, for the sad news reached us last night, but without any particulars. It came in a short letter to Martha from her sister, begun at Steventon, and finished in Winchester.

We have felt—we do feel—for you all, as you will not need to be told : for you, for Fanny, for Henry, for Lady Bridges, and for dearest Edward, whose loss and whose sufferings seem to make those of every other person nothing. God be praised that you can say what you do of him : that he has a religious mind to bear him up, and a disposition that will gradually lead him to comfort.

My dear, dear Fanny, I am so thankful that she has you with her ! You will be everything to her ; you will give her all the consolation that human aid can give. May the Almighty sustain you all, and keep you, my dearest Cassandra, well ; but for the present I dare say you are equal to everything.

You will know that the poor boys are at Steventon. Perhaps it is best for them, as they will have more means of exercise and amusement there than they could have with us, but I own myself disappointed by the arrangement. I should have loved to have them with me at such a time. I shall write to Edward by this post.

We shall, of course, hear from you again very

soon, and as often as you can write. We will write as you desire, and I shall add Bookham. Hamstall, I suppose, you write to yourselves, as you do not mention it.

What a comfort that Mrs. Deedes is saved from present misery and alarm ! But it will fall heavy upon poor Harriot ; and as for Lady B., but that her fortitude does seem truly great, I should fear the effect of such a blow, and so unlooked for. I long to hear more of you all. Of Henry's anguish I think with grief and solicitude ; but he will exert himself to be of use and comfort.

With what true sympathy our feelings are shared by Martha you need not be told ; she is the friend and sister under every circumstance.

We need not enter into a panegyric on the departed, but it is sweet to think of her great worth, of her solid principles, of her true devotion, her excellence in every relation of life. It is also consolatory to reflect on the shortness of the sufferings which led her from this world to a better.

Farewell for the present, my dearest sister. Tell Edward that we feel for him and pray for him.

Yours affectionately,

J. AUSTEN.

I will write to Catherine.

Perhaps you can give me some directions about mourning.

Miss Austen,

Edward Austen's, Esq., Godmersham Park,
Faversham, Kent.

*To Cassandra Austen*CASTLE SQUARE, *Saturday night (October 15), 1808.*

MY DEAR CASSANDRA,

Your accounts make us as comfortable as we can expect to be at such a time. Edward's loss is terrible, and must be felt as such, and these are too early days indeed to think of moderation in grief, either in him or his afflicted daughter, but soon we may hope that our dear Fanny's sense of duty to that beloved father will rouse her to exertion. For his sake, and as the most acceptable proof of love to the spirit of her departed mother, she will try to be tranquil and resigned. Does she feel you to be a comfort to her, or is she too much overpowered for anything but solitude ?

Your account of Lizzy is very interesting. Poor child ! One must hope the impression *will* be strong, and yet one's heart aches for a dejected mind of eight years old.

I suppose you see the corpse ? How does it appear ? We are anxious to be assured that Edward will not attend the funeral, but when it comes to the point I think he must feel it impossible.

Your parcel shall set off on Monday, and I hope the shoes will fit ; Martha and I both tried them on. I shall send you such of your mourning as I think most likely to be useful, reserving for myself your stockings and half the velvet, in which selfish arrangement I know I am doing what you wish.

I am to be in bombazeen and crape, according to what we are told is universal *here*, and which agrees with Martha's previous observation. My mourning, however, will not impoverish me, for by having my velvet pelisse fresh lined and made up, I am sure I shall have no occasion *this winter* for anything new of that sort. I take my cloak for the lining, and shall send yours on the chance of its doing something of the same for you, though I believe your pelisse is in better repair than mine. *One* Miss Baker makes my gown and the other my bonnet, which is to be silk covered with crape.

I have written to Edward Cooper, and hope he will not send one of his letters of cruel comfort to my poor brother ; and yesterday I wrote to Alethea Bigg, in reply to a letter from her. She tells us in confidence that Catherine is to be married on Tuesday se'nnight. Mr. Hill is expected at Manydown in the course of the ensuing week.

We are desired by Mrs. Harrison and Miss Austen to say everything proper for them to yourself and Edward on this sad occasion, especially that nothing but a wish of not giving additional trouble where so much is inevitable prevents their writing themselves to express their concern. They seem truly to feel concern.

I am glad you can say what you do of Mrs. Knight and of Goodnestone in general ; it is a great relief to me to know that the shock did not make any of them ill. But what a task was yours to announce it ! *Now* I hope you are not overpowered

with letter-writing, as Henry and John can ease you of many of your correspondents.

Was Mr. Scudamore in the house at the time, was any application attempted, and is the seizure at all accounted for ?

Sunday.—As Edward's letter to his son is not come here, we know that you must have been informed as early as Friday of the boys being at Steventon, which I am glad of.

Upon your letter to Dr. Goddard's being forwarded to them, Mary wrote to ask whether my mother wished to have her grandsons sent to her. We decided on their remaining where they were, which I hope my brother will approve of. I am sure he will do us the justice of believing that in such a decision we sacrificed inclination to what we thought best.

I shall write by the coach to-morrow to Mrs. J. A., and to Edward, about their mourning, though this day's post will probably bring directions to them on that subject from yourselves. I shall certainly make use of the opportunity of addressing our nephew on the most serious of all concerns, as I naturally did in my letter to him before. The poor boys are, perhaps, more comfortable at Steventon than they could be here, but you will understand *my feelings* with respect to it.

To-morrow will be a dreadful day for you all. Mr. Whitfield's will be a severe duty. Glad shall I be to hear that it is over.

That you are for ever in our thoughts you will not

doubt. I see your mournful party in my mind's eye under every varying circumstance of the day ; and in the evening especially figure to myself its sad gloom : the efforts to talk, the frequent summons to melancholy orders and cares, and poor Edward, restless in misery, going from one room to another, and perhaps not seldom upstairs, to see all that remains of his Elizabeth. Dearest Fanny must now look upon herself as his prime source of comfort, his dearest friend ; as the being who is gradually to supply to him, to the extent that is possible, what he has lost. This consideration will elevate and cheer her.

Adieu. You cannot write too often, as I said before. We are heartily rejoiced that the poor baby gives you no particular anxiety. Kiss dear Lizzy for us. Tell Fanny that I shall write in a day or two to Miss Sharp.

My mother is not ill.

Yours most truly,

J. AUSTEN.

Tell Henry that a hamper of apples is gone to him from Kintbury, and that Mr. Fowle intended writing on Friday (supposing him in London) to beg that the charts, &c., may be consigned to the care of the Palmers. Mrs. Fowle has also written to Miss Palmer to beg she will send for them.

Miss Austen,

Edward Austen's, Esq., Godmersham Park,
Faversham, Kent.

*To Cassandra Austen*SLOANE STREET, *Monday (May 24)*, 1813.

MY DEAREST CASSANDRA,

I am very much obliged to you for writing to me. You must have hated it after a worrying morning. Your letter came just in time to save my going to Remnant's, and fit me for Christian's, where I bought Fanny's dimity.

I went the day before (Friday) to Layton's, as I proposed, and got my mother's gown—seven yards at 6s. 6d. I then walked into No. 10, which is all dirt and confusion, but in a very promising way, and after being present at the opening of a new account, to my great amusement, Henry and I went to the exhibition in Spring Gardens. It is not thought a good collection, but I was very well pleased, particularly (pray tell Fanny) with a small portrait of Mrs. Bingley, excessively like her.

I went in hopes of seeing one of her sister, but there was no Mrs. Darcy. Perhaps, however, I may find her in the great exhibition, which we shall go to if we have time. I have no chance of her in the collection of Sir Joshua Reynolds's paintings, which is now showing in Pall Mall, and which we are also to visit.

Mrs. Bingley's is exactly herself—size, shaped face, features, and sweetness; there never was a greater likeness. She is dressed in a white gown, with green ornaments, which convinces me of what I had always supposed, that green was a favourite

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colour with her. I dare say Mrs. D. will be in yellow.

Friday was our worst day as to weather. We were out in a very long and very heavy storm of hail, and there had been others before, but I heard no thunder. Saturday was a good deal better ; dry and cold.

I gave 2s. 6d. for the dimity. I do not boast of any bargains, but think the sarsenet and dimity good of their sort.

I have bought your locket, but was obliged to give 18s. for it, which must be rather more than you intended. It is neat and plain, set in gold.

We were to have gone to the Somerset House Exhibition on Saturday, but when I reached Henrietta Street Mr. Hampson was wanted there, and Mr. Tilson and I were obliged to drive about town after him, and by the time we had done it was too late for anything but home. We never found him after all.

I have been interrupted by Mrs. Tilson. Poor woman ! She is in danger of not being able to attend Lady Drummond Smith's party to-night. Miss Burdett was to have taken her, and now Miss Burdett has a cough and will not go. My cousin *Caroline* is her sole dependence.

The events of yesterday were, our going to Belgrave Chapel in the morning, our being prevented by the rain from going to evening service at St. James, Mr. Hampson's calling, Messrs. Barlow and Phillips dining here, and Mr. and Mrs. Tilson's coming in the evening *à l'ordinaire*. *She* drank tea

with us both Thursday and Saturday ; *he* dined out each day, and on Friday we were with them, and they wish us to go to them to-morrow evening, to meet Miss Burdett, but I do not know how it will end. Henry talks of a drive to Hampstead, which may interfere with it.

I should like to see Miss Burdett very well, but that I am rather frightened by hearing that she wishes to be introduced to *me*. If I *am* a wild beast I cannot help it. It is not my own fault.

There is no change in our plan of leaving London, but we shall not be with you before Tuesday. Henry thinks Monday would appear too early a day. There is no danger of our being induced to stay longer.

I have not quite determined how I shall manage about my clothes ; perhaps there may be only my trunk to send by the coach, or there may be a band-box with it. I have taken your gentle hint, and written to Mrs. Hill.

The Hoblyns want us to dine with them, but we have refused. When Henry returns he will be dining out a great deal, I dare say ; as he will then be alone, it will be more desirable ; he will be more welcome at every table, and every invitation more welcome to him. He will not want either of us again till he is settled in Henrietta Street. This is my present persuasion. And he will not be settled there—really settled—till late in the autumn ; “ he will not be come to bide ” till after September.

There is a gentleman in treaty for this house.

Gentleman himself is in the country, but gentleman's friend came to see it the other day, and seemed pleased on the whole. Gentleman would rather prefer an increased rent to parting with five hundred guineas at once, and if that is the only difficulty it will not be minded. Henry is indifferent as to the which.

Get us the best weather you can for Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. We are to go to Windsor in our way to Henley, which will be a great delight. We shall be leaving Sloane Street about 12, two or three hours after Charles's party have begun their journey. You will miss them, but the comfort of getting back into your room will be great. And then the tea and sugar !

I fear Miss Clewes is not better, or you would have mentioned it. I shall not write again unless I have any unexpected communication or opportunity to tempt me. I enclose Mr. Herington's bill and receipt.

I am very much obliged to Fanny for her letter ; it made me laugh heartily, but I cannot pretend to answer it. Even had I more time, I should not feel at all sure of the sort of letter that Miss D.¹ would write. I hope Miss Benn is got well again, and will have a comfortable dinner with you to-day.

Monday Evening.—We have been both to the exhibition and Sir J. Reynolds's, and I am disappointed, for there was nothing like Mrs. D. at either. I can only imagine that Mr. D. prizes any

¹ Miss Darcy.

picture of her too much to like it should be exposed to the public eye. I can imagine he would have that sort of feeling—that mixture of love, pride, and delicacy.

Setting aside this disappointment, I had great amusement among the pictures ; and the driving about, the carriage being open, was very pleasant. I liked my solitary elegance very much, and was ready to laugh all the time at my being where I was. I could not but feel that I had naturally small right to be parading about London in a barouche.

Henry desires Edward may know that he has just bought three dozen of claret for him (cheap), and ordered it to be sent down to Chawton.

I should not wonder if we got no farther than Reading on Thursday evening, and so reach Steven-ton only to a reasonable dinner hour the next day ; but whatever I may write or you may imagine we know it will be something different. I shall be quiet to-morrow morning ; all my business is done, and I shall only call again upon Mrs. Hoblyn, &c.

Love to your much . . . party.

Yours affectionately,

J. AUSTEN.

May 24, 1813. From Sloane St.

Miss Austen, Chawton.

By favour of Messrs. Gray & Vincent.

To Cassandra Austen

HENRIETTA ST., *Wednesday* (Sept. 15, $\frac{1}{2}$ past 8), 1813.

Here I am, my dearest Cassandra, seated in the breakfast, dining, sitting-room, beginning with all my might. Fanny will join me as soon as she is dressed and begin her letter.

We had a very good journey, weather and roads excellent ; the three first stages for 1s. 6d., and our only misadventure the being delayed about a quarter of an hour at Kingston for horses, and being obliged to put up with a pair belonging to a hackney coach and their coachman, which left no room on the barouche box for Lizzy, who was to have gone her last stage there as she did the first ; consequently we were all four within, which was a little crowded.

We arrived at a quarter-past four, and were kindly welcomed by the coachman, and then by his master, and then by William, and then by Mrs. Perigord, who all met us before we reached the foot of the stairs. Mde. Bignon was below dressing us a most comfortable dinner of soup, fish, bouillée, partridges, and an apple tart, which we sat down to soon after five, after cleaning and dressing ourselves and feeling that we were most commodiously disposed of. The little adjoining dressing-room to our apartment makes Fanny and myself very well off indeed, and as we have poor Eliza's ¹ bed our space is ample every way.

¹ Eliza, Henry Austen's first wife, who had died in the earlier part of this year.

Sace arrived safely about half-past six. At seven we set off in a coach for the Lyceum ; were at home again in about four hours and a half ; had soup and wine and water, and then went to our holes.

Edward finds his quarters very snug and quiet. I must get a softer pen. This is harder. I am in agonies. I have not yet seen Mr. Crabbe. Martha's letter is gone to the post.

I am going to write nothing but short sentences. There shall be two full stops in every line. Layton and Shear's is Bedford House. We mean to get there before breakfast if it's possible ; for we feel more and more how much we have to do and how little time. This house looks very nice. It seems like Sloane Street moved here. I believe Henry is just rid of Sloane Street. Fanny does not come, but I have Edward seated by me beginning a letter, which looks natural.

Henry has been suffering from the pain in the face which he has been subject to before. He caught cold at Matlock, and since his return has been paying a little for past pleasure. It is nearly removed now, but he looks thin in the face, either from the pain or the fatigues of his tour, which must have been great.

Lady Robert is delighted with P. and P.,¹ and really *was* so, as I understand, before she knew who wrote it, for, of course, she knows now. He told her with as much satisfaction as if it were my wish. He did not tell *me* this, but he told Fanny. And

¹ " Pride and Prejudice."

Mr. Hastings ! I am quite delighted with what such a man writes about it. Henry sent him the books after his return from Daylesford, but you will hear the letter too.

Let me be rational, and return to my two full stops.

I talked to Henry at the play last night. We were in a private box—Mr. Spencer's—which made it much more pleasant. The box is directly on the stage. One is infinitely less fatigued than in the common way. But Henry's plans are not what one could wish. He does not mean to be at Chawton till the 29th. He must be in town again by Oct. 5. His plan is to get a couple of days of pheasant shooting and then return directly. His wish was to bring you back with him. I have told him your scruples. He wishes you to suit yourself as to time, and if you cannot come till later, will send for you at any time as far as Bagshot. He presumed you would not find difficulty in getting so far. I could not say you would. He proposed your going with him into Oxfordshire. It was his own thought at first. I could not but catch at it for you.

We have talked of it again this morning (for now we have breakfasted), and I am convinced that if you can make it suit in other respects you need not scruple on his account. If you cannot come back with him on the 3rd or 4th, therefore, I do hope you will contrive to go to Adlestrop. By not beginning your absence till about the middle of this month I think you may manage it very well. But

you will think all this over. One could wish he had intended to come to you earlier, but it cannot be helped.

I said nothing to him of Mrs. H. and Miss B., that he might not suppose difficulties. Shall not you put *them* into our own room? This seems to me the best plan, and the maid will be most conveniently near.

Oh, dear me! when shall I ever have done? We *did* go to Layton and Shear's before breakfast. Very pretty English poplins at 4s. 3d.; Irish, ditto at 6s.; *more* pretty, certainly—beautiful.

Fanny and the two little girls are gone to take places for to-night at Covent Garden; "Clandestine Marriage" and "Midas." The latter will be a fine show for L. and M.¹ They revelled last night in "Don Juan," whom we left in hell at half-past eleven. We had scaramouch and a ghost, and were delighted. I speak of *them*; *my* delight was very tranquil, and the rest of us were sober-minded. "Don Juan" was the last of three musical things. "Five hours at Brighton," in three acts—of which one was over before we arrived, none the worse—and the "Beehive," rather less flat and trumpery.

I have this moment received 5*l.* from kind, beautiful Edward. Fanny has a similar gift. I shall save what I can of it for your better leisure in this place. *My* letter was from Miss Sharp—nothing particular. A letter from Fanny Cage this morning.

¹ Lizzie and Marianne.

Four o'clock.—We are just come back from doing Mrs. Tickars, Miss Hare, and Mr. Spence. Mr. Hall is here, and, while Fanny is under his hands, I will try to write a little more.

Miss Hare had some pretty caps, and is to make me one like one of them, only *white* satin instead of blue. It will be white satin and lace, and a little white flower perking out of the left ear, like Harriot Byron's feather. I have allowed her to go as far as 1*l.* 16*s.* My gown is to be trimmed everywhere with white ribbon plaited on somehow or other. She says it will look well. I am not sanguine. They trim with white very much.

I learnt from Mrs. Tickars's young lady, to my high amusement, that the stays now are not made to force the bosom up at all ; *that* was a very unbecoming, unnatural fashion. I was really glad to hear that they are not to be so much off the shoulders as they were.

Going to Mr. Spence's was a sad business and cost us many tears ; unluckily we were obliged to go a second time before he could do more than just look. We went first at half-past twelve and afterwards at three ; papa with us each time ; and, alas ! we are to go again to-morrow. Lizzy is not finished yet. There have been no teeth taken out, however, nor will be, I believe, but he finds *hers* in a very bad state, and seems to think particularly ill of their durability. They have been all cleaned, *hers* filed, and are to be filed again. There is a very sad hole between two of her front teeth.

Thursday Morning, Half-past Seven.—Up and dressed and downstairs in order to finish my letter in time for the parcel. At eight I have an appointment with Madame B., who wants to show me something downstairs. At nine we are to set off for Grafton House, and get that over before breakfast. Edward is so kind as to walk there with us. We are to be at Mr. Spence's again at 11·5; from that time shall be driving about I suppose till four o'clock at least. We are, if possible, to call on Mrs. Tilson.

Mr. Hall was very punctual yesterday, and curled me out at a great rate. I thought it looked hideous, and longed for a snug cap instead, but my companions silenced me by their admiration. I had only a bit of velvet round my head. I did not catch cold, however. The weather is all in my favour. I have had no pain in my face since I left you.

We had very good places in the box next the stage-box, front and second row; the three old ones behind of course. I was particularly disappointed at seeing nothing of Mr. Crabbe. I felt sure of him when I saw that the boxes were fitted up with crimson velvet. The new Mr. Terry was Lord Ogleby, and Henry thinks he may do; but there was no acting more than moderate, and I was as much amused by the remembrances connected with "Midas" as with any part of it. The girls were very much delighted, but still prefer "Don Juan"; and I must say that I have seen nobody on the stage

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who has been a more interesting character than that
compound of cruelty and lust.

It was not possible for me to get the worsteds
yesterday. I heard Edward last night pressing
Henry to come to you, and I think Henry engaged
to go there after his November collection. Nothing
has been done as to S. and S.¹ The books came to
hand too late for him to have time for it before he
went. Mr. Hastings never *hinted* at Eliza in the
smallest degree. Henry knew nothing of Mr.
Trimmer's death. I tell you these things that you
may not have to ask them over again.

There is a new clerk sent down to Alton, a
Mr. Edmund Williams, a young man whom Henry
thinks most highly of, and he turns out to be a son
of the luckless Williamses of Grosvenor Place.

I long to have you hear Mr. H.'s opinion of
P. and P. His admiring my Elizabeth so much
is particularly welcome to me.

Instead of saving my superfluous wealth for you
to spend, I am going to treat myself with spending it
myself. I hope, at least, that I shall find some poplin
at Layton and Shear's that will tempt me to buy it.
If I do, it shall be sent to Chawton, as half will be
for you ; for I depend upon your being so kind as
to accept it, being the main point. It will be a great
pleasure to me. Don't say a word. I only wish
you could choose too. I shall send twenty yards.

Now for Bath. Poor F. Cage has suffered a good
deal from her accident. The noise of the White

¹ " Sense and Sensibility."

Hart was terrible to her. They will keep her quiet, I dare say. *She* is not so much delighted with the place as the rest of the party ; probably, as she says herself, from having been less well, but she thinks she should like it better in the season. The streets are very empty now, and the shops not so gay as she expected. They are at No. 1 Henrietta Street, the corner of Laura Place, and have no acquaintance at present but the Bramstons.

Lady Bridges drinks at the Cross Bath, her son at the Hot, and Louisa is going to bathe. Dr. Parry seems to be half starving Mr. Bridges, for he is restricted to much such a diet as James's bread, water and meat, and is never to eat so much of that as he wishes, and he is to walk a great deal—walk till he drops, I believe—gout or no gout. It really is to that purpose. I have not exaggerated.

Charming weather for you and us, and the travellers, and everybody. You will take your walk this afternoon, and . . .

Henrietta St., the autumn of 1813.

Miss Austen, Chawton.

By favour of Mr. Gray.

To Cassandra Austen

GODMERSHAM PARK, *Thursday* (Oct. 14), 1813.

MY DEAREST CASSANDRA,

Now I will prepare for Mr. Lushington, and as it will be wisest also to prepare for his not coming, or my not getting a frank, I shall write very close from

the first, and even leave room for the seal in the proper place. When I have followed up my last with this I shall feel somewhat less unworthy of you than the state of our correspondence now requires.

I left off in a great hurry to prepare for our morning visits. Of course I was ready a good deal the first, and need not have hurried so much. Fanny wore her new gown and cap. I was surprised to find Mystole so pretty.

The ladies were at home. I was in luck, and saw Lady Fagg, and all her five daughters, with an old Mrs. Hamilton, from Canterbury, and Mrs. and Miss Chapman, from Margate, into the bargain. I never saw so plain a family—five sisters so very plain! They are as plain as the Foresters, or the Franfraddops, or the Seagraves, or the Rivers, excluding Sophy. Miss Sally Fagg has a pretty figure, and that comprises all the good looks of the family.

It was stupidish; Fanny did her part very well, but there was a lack of talk altogether, and the three friends in the house only sat by and looked at us. However, Miss Chapman's name is Laura, and she had a double flounce to her gown. You really must get some flounces. Are not some of your large stock of white morning gowns just in a happy state for a flounce—too short? Nobody at home at either house in Chilham.

Edward Bridges and his friend did not forget to arrive. The friend is a Mr. Wigram, one of the three-and-twenty children of a great rich mercantile,

Sir Robert Wigram, an old acquaintance of the Footes, but very recently known to Edward B. The history of his coming here is, that, intending to go from Ramsgate to Brighton, Edw. B. persuaded him to take Lenham on his way, which gave him the convenience of Mr. W.'s gig, and the comfort of not being alone there ; but, probably thinking a few days of Gm. would be the cheapest and pleasantest way of entertaining his friend and himself, offered a visit here, and here they stay till to-morrow.

Mr. W. is about five or six-and-twenty, not ill-looking, and not agreeable. He is certainly no addition. A sort of cool, gentlemanlike manner, but very silent. They say his name is Henry, a proof how unequally the gifts of fortune are bestowed. I have seen many a John and Thomas much more agreeable.

We have got rid of Mr. R. Mascall, however. I did not like *him* either. He talks too much, and is conceited, besides having a vulgarly shaped mouth. He slept here on Tuesday, so that yesterday Fanny and I sat down to breakfast with six gentlemen to admire us.

We did not go to the ball. It was left to her to decide, and at last she determined against it. She knew that it would be a sacrifice on the part of her father and brothers if they went, and I hope it will prove that *she* has not sacrificed much. It is not likely that there should have been anybody there whom she would care for. *I* was very glad to be spared the trouble of dressing and going, and being

weary before it was half over, so my gown and my cap are still unworn. It will appear at last, perhaps, that I might have done without either. I produced my brown bombazine yesterday, and it was very much admired indeed, and I like it better than ever.

You have given many particulars of the state of Chawton House, but still we want more. Edward wants to be expressly told that all the round tower, &c., is entirely down, and the door from the best room stopped up ; he does not know enough of the appearance of things in that quarter.

He heard from Bath yesterday. Lady B. continues very well, and Dr. Parry's opinion is, that while the water agrees with her she ought to remain there, which throws their coming away at a greater uncertainty than we had supposed. It will end, perhaps, in a fit of the gout, which may prevent her coming away. Louisa thinks her mother's being so well may be quite as much owing to her being so much out of doors as to the water. Lady B. is going to try the hot pump, the Cross bath being about to be painted. Louisa is particularly well herself, and thinks the water has been of use to her. She mentioned our inquiries, &c., to Mr. and Mrs. Alex. Evelyn, and had their best compliments and thanks to give in return. Dr. Parry does not expect Mr. E. to last much longer.

Only think of Mrs. Holder's being dead ! Poor woman, she has done the only thing in the world she could possibly do to make one cease to abuse her. Now, if you please, Hooper must have it in

his power to do more by his uncle. Lucky for the little girl. An Anne Ekins can hardly be so unfit for the care of a child as a Mrs. Holder.

A letter from Wrotham yesterday offering an early visit here, and Mr. and Mrs. Moore and one child are to come on Monday for ten days. I hope Charles and Fanny may not fix the same time, but if they come at all in October they *must*. What is the use of hoping? The two parties of children is the chief evil.

To be sure, here we are; the very thing has happened, or rather worse—a letter from Charles this very morning, which gives us reason to suppose they may come here to-day. It depends upon the weather, and the weather now is very fine. No difficulties are made, however, and, indeed, there will be no want of room; but I wish there were no Wigrams and Lushingtons in the way to fill up the table and make us such a motley set. I cannot spare Mr. Lushington either, because of his frank, but Mr. Wigram does no good to anybody. I cannot imagine how a man can have the impudence to come into a family party for three days, where he is quite a stranger, unless he knows himself to be agreeable on undoubted authority. He and Edw. B. are going to ride to Eastwell, and as the boys are hunting, and my brother is gone to Canty., Fanny and I have a quiet morning before us.

Edward has driven off poor Mrs. Salkeld. It was thought a good opportunity of doing something towards clearing the house. By her own desire

Mrs. Fanny¹ is to be put in the room next the nursery, her baby in a little bed by her; and as *Cassy* is to have the closet within, and *Betsey* William's little hole, they will be all very snug together. I shall be most happy to see dear Charles, and he will be as happy as he can with a cross child, or some such care, pressing on him at the time. I should be very happy in the idea of seeing little *Cassy* again, too, did not I fear she would disappoint me by some immediate disagreeableness.

We had the good old original *Brett* and *Toke* calling here yesterday, separately. Mr. *Toke* I am always very fond of. He inquired after you and my mother, which adds esteem to passion. The *Charles Cages* are staying at *Godington*. I *knew* they must be staying somewhere soon. *Ed. Hussey* is warned out of *Pett*, and talks of fixing at *Ramsgate*. Bad taste! He is very fond of the sea, however. Some taste in that, and some judgment, too, in fixing on *Ramsgate*, as being by the sea.

The comfort of the billiard-table here is very great; it draws all the gentlemen to it whenever they are within, especially after dinner, so that my brother, *Fanny*, and I have the library to ourselves in delightful quiet. There is no truth in the report of *G. Hatton* being to marry *Miss Wemyss*. He desires it may be contradicted.

Have you done anything about our present to *Miss Benn*? I suppose she must have a bed at my mother's whenever she dines there. How will they

¹ *Mrs.* Charles Austen, née *Fanny Palmer*.

manage as to inviting her when you are gone ? and if they invite, how will they continue to entertain her ?

Let me know as many of your parting arrangements as you can, as to wine, &c. I wonder whether the ink-bottle has been filled. Does butcher's meat keep up at the same price, and is not bread lower than 2s. 6d. ? Mary's blue gown ! My mother must be in agonies. I have a great mind to have *my* blue gown dyed some time or other. I proposed it once to you, and you made some objection, I forget what. It is the fashion of flounces that gives it particular expediency.

Mrs. and Miss Wildman have just been here. Miss is very plain. I wish Lady B. may be returned before we leave Gm., that Fanny may spend the time of her father's absence at Goodnestone, which is what she would prefer.

Friday.—They came last night at about seven. We had given them up, but *I still* expected them to come. Dessert was nearly over ; a better time for arriving than an hour and a half earlier. They were late because they did not set out earlier, and did not allow time enough. Charles did not *aim* at more than reaching Sittingbourne by three, which could not have brought them here by dinner time. They had a very rough passage ; he would not have ventured if he had known how bad it would be.

However, here they are, safe and well, just like their own nice selves, Fanny looking as neat and white this morning as possible, and dear Charles

all affectionate, placid, quiet, cheerful, good humour. They are both looking very well, but poor little Cassy is grown extremely thin, and looks poorly. I hope a week's country air and exercise may do her good. I am sorry to say it can be but a week. The baby does not appear so large in proportion as she was, nor quite so pretty, but I have seen very little of her. Cassy was too tired and bewildered just at first to seem to know anybody. We met them in the hall—the women and girl part of us—but before we reached the library she kissed me very affectionately, and has since seemed to recollect me in the same way.

It was quite an evening of confusion, as you may suppose. At first we were all walking about from one part of the house to the other ; then came a fresh dinner in the breakfast-room for Charles and his wife, which Fanny and I attended ; then we moved into the library, were joined by the dining-room people, were introduced, and so forth ; and then we had tea and coffee, which was not over till past 10. Billiards again drew all the odd ones away, and Edward, Charles, the two Fannies, and I sat snugly talking. I shall be glad to have our numbers a little reduced, and by the time you receive this we shall be only a family, though a large family, party. Mr. Lushington goes to-morrow.

Now I must speak of *him*, and I like him very much. I am sure he is clever, and a man of taste. He got a volume of Milton last night, and spoke of it with warmth. He is quite an M.P., very smiling,

with an exceeding good address and readiness of language. I am rather in love with him. I dare say he is ambitious and insincere. He puts me in mind of Mr. Dundas. He has a wide smiling mouth, and very good teeth, and something the same complexion and nose. He is a much shorter man, with Martha's leave. Does Martha never hear from Mrs. Craven? Is Mrs. Craven never at home?

We breakfasted in the dining-room to-day, and are now all pretty well dispersed and quiet. Charles and George are gone out shooting together, to Winnigates and Seaton Wood. I asked on purpose to tell Henry. Mr. Lushington and Edwd. are gone some other way. I wish Charles may kill something, but this high wind is against their sport.

Lady Williams is living at the Rose at Sittingbourne; they called upon her yesterday; she cannot live at Sheerness, and as soon as she gets to Sittingbourne is quite well. In return for all your matches, I announce that her brother William is going to marry a Miss Austen, of a Wiltshire family, who say they are related to us.

I talk to Cassy about Chawton; she remembers much, but does not volunteer on the subject. Poor little love! I wish she were not so very Palmery, but it seems stronger than ever. I never knew a wife's family features have such undue influence.

Papa and mamma have not yet made up their mind as to parting with her or not; the chief, indeed the only, difficulty with mamma is a very reasonable one, the child's being very unwilling to

leave them. When it was mentioned to her she did not like the idea of it at all. At the same time, she has been suffering so much lately from seasickness that her mamma cannot bear to have her much on board this winter. Charles is less inclined to part with her. I do not know how it will end, or what is to determine it. He desires his best love to you, and has not written because he has not been able to decide. They are both very sensible of your kindness on the occasion.

I have made Charles furnish me with something to say about young Kendall. He is going on very well. When he first joined the "Namur" my brother did not find him forward enough to be what they call put in the office, and therefore placed him under the schoolmaster, but he is very much improved, and goes into the office now every afternoon, still attending school in the morning.

This cold weather comes very fortunately for Edward's nerves, with such a house full ; it suits him exactly ; he is all alive and cheerful. Poor James, on the contrary, must be running his toes into the fire. I find that Mary Jane Fowle was very near returning with her brother and paying them a visit on board. I forget exactly what hindered her ; I believe the Cheltenham scheme. I am glad something did. They are to go to Cheltenham on Monday se'nnight. I don't vouch for their going, you know ; it only comes from one of the family.

Now I think I have written you a good-sized letter, and may deserve whatever I can get in reply.

Infinites of love. I must distinguish that of Fanny, senior, who particularly desires to be remembered to you all.

Yours very affectionately,

J. AUSTEN.

Faversham, Oct. 15, 1813.

Miss Austen, Chawton, Alton, Hants.

Per S. R. Lushington.

To Cassandra Austen

GODMERSHAM PARK, *Wednesday* (Nov. 3), 1813.

MY DEAREST CASSANDRA,

I will keep this celebrated birthday by writing to you, and as my pen seems inclined to write large, I will put my lines very close together. I had but just time to enjoy your letter yesterday before Edward and I set off in the chair for Canty., and I allowed him to hear the chief of it as we went along.

We rejoice sincerely in Henry's gaining ground as he does, and hope there will be weather for him to get out every day this week, as the likeliest way of making him equal to what he plans for the next. If he is tolerably well, the going into Oxfordshire will make him better, by making him happier.

Can it be, that I have not given you the minutiae of Edward's plans? See, here they are: To go to Wrotham on Saturday the 13th, spend Sunday there, and be in town on Monday to dinner, and, if agreeable to Henry, spend one whole day with him, which day is likely to be Tuesday, and so go down to Chawton on Wednesday.

But now I cannot be quite easy without staying a little while with Henry, unless he wishes it otherwise ; his illness and the dull time of year together make me feel that it would be horrible of me not to offer to remain with him, and therefore unless you know of any objection, I wish you would tell him with my best love that I shall be most happy to spend ten days or a fortnight in Henrietta St., if he will accept me. I do not offer more than a fortnight, because I shall then have been some time from home ; but it will be a great pleasure to be with him, as it always is. I have the less regret and scruple on your account, because I shall see you for a day and a half, and because you will have Edward for at least a week. My scheme is to take Bookham in my way home for a few days, and my hope that Henry will be so good as to send me some part of the way thither. I have a most kind repetition of Mrs. Cooke's two or three dozen invitations, with the offer of meeting me anywhere in one of her airings.

Fanny's cold is much better. By dosing and keeping her room on Sunday, she got rid of the worst of it, but I am rather afraid of what this day may do for her ; she is gone to Canty. with Miss Clewes, Liz., and Ma^{rnn}., and it is but roughish weather for any one in a tender state. Miss Clewes has been going to Canty. ever since her return, and it is now just accomplishing.

Edward and I had a delightful morning for our drive *there*, I enjoyed it thoroughly ; but the day turned off before we were ready, and we came home

in some rain and the apprehension of a great deal. It has not done us any harm, however. He went to inspect the gaol, as a visiting magistrate, and took me with him. I was gratified, and went through all the feelings which people must go through, I think, in visiting such a building. We paid no other visits, only walked about snugly together and shopped. I bought a concert ticket and a sprig of flowers for my old age.

To vary the subject from gay to grave with inimitable address, I shall now tell you something of the Bath party—and still a Bath party they are, for a fit of the gout came on last week. The accounts of Lady B. are as good as can be under such a circumstance; Dr. P. says it appears a good sort of gout, and her spirits are better than usual, but as to her coming away, it is of course all uncertainty. I have very little doubt of Edward's going down to Bath, if they have not left it when he is in Hampshire; if he does, he will go on from Steventon, and then return direct to London, without coming back to Chawton. This detention does not suit his feelings. It may be rather a good thing, however, that Dr. P. should see Lady B. with the gout on her. Harriot was quite wishing for it.

The day seems to improve. I wish my pen would, too.

Sweet Mr. Ogle. I dare say he sees all the panoramas for nothing, has free admittance everywhere; he is so delightful! Now, you need not see anybody else.

I am glad to hear of our being likely to have a peep at Charles and Fanny at Christmas, but do not force poor Cass. to stay if she hates it. You have done very right as to Mrs. F. A. Your tidings of S. and S. give me pleasure. I have never seen it advertised.

Harriot, in a letter to Fanny to-day, inquires whether they sell cloths for pelisses at Bedford House, and, if they do, will be very much obliged to you to desire them to send her down patterns, with the width and prices ; they may go from Charing Cross almost any day in the week, but if it is a *ready money* house it will not do, for the *bru of feu* the Archbishop says she cannot pay for it immediately. Fanny and I suspect they do not deal in the article.

The Sherers, I believe, are now really going to go ; Joseph has had a bed here the two last nights, and I do not know whether this is not the day of moving. Mrs. Sherer called yesterday to take leave. The weather looks worse again.

We dine at Chilham Castle to-morrow, and I expect to find some amusement, but more from the concert the next day, as I am sure of seeing several that I want to see. We are to meet a party from Goodnestone, Lady B., Miss Hawley, and Lucy Foote, and I am to meet Mrs. Harrison, and we are to talk about Ben and Anna. " My dear Mrs. Harrison," I shall say, " I am afraid the young man has some of your family madness, and though there often appears to be something of madness in Anna too, I think she inherits more of it from her mother's family than from ours." That is what

I shall say, and I think she will find it difficult to answer me.

I took up your letter again to refresh me, being somewhat tired, and was struck with the prettiness of the hand : it is really a very pretty hand now and then—so small and so neat ! I wish I could get as much into a sheet of paper. Another time I will take two days to make a letter in : it is fatiguing to write a whole long one at once. I hope to hear from you again on Sunday and again on Friday, the day before we move. On Monday, I suppose, you will be going to Streatham, to see quiet Mr. Hill and eat very bad baker's bread.

A fall in bread by-the-bye. I hope my mother's bill next week will show it. I have had a very comfortable letter from her, one of her foolscap sheets quite full of little home news. Anna was there the first of the two days. An Anna sent away and an Anna fetched are different things. This will be an excellent time for Ben to pay his visit, now that we, the formidables, are absent.

I did not mean to eat, but Mr. Johncock has brought in the tray, so I must. I am all alone. Edward is gone into his woods. At this present time I have five tables, eight-and-twenty chairs, and two fires all to myself.

Miss Clewes is to be invited to go to the concert with us ; there will be my brother's place and ticket for her, as he cannot go. He and the other connections of the Cages are to meet at Milgate that very day, to consult about a proposed alteration of the

Maidstone road, in which the Cages are very much interested. Sir Brook comes here in the morning, and they are to be joined by Mr. Deedes at Ashford. The loss of the concert will be no great evil to the Squire. We shall be a party of three ladies therefore, and to meet three ladies.

What a convenient carriage Henry's is, to his friends in general ! Who has it next ? I am glad William's going is voluntary, and on no worse grounds. An inclination for the country is a venial fault. He has more of Cowper than of Johnson in him—fonder of tame hares and blank verse than of the full tide of human existence at Charing Cross.

Oh ! I have more of such sweet flattery from Miss Sharp. She is an excellent kind friend. I am read and admired in Ireland, too. There is a Mrs. Fletcher, the wife of a judge, an old lady, and very good and very clever, who is all curiosity to know about me—what I am like, and so forth. I am not known to her by *name*, however. This comes through Mrs. Carrick, not through Mrs. Gore. You are quite out there.

I do not despair of having my picture in the Exhibition at last—all white and red, with my head on one side ; or perhaps I may marry young Mr. D'Arblay. I suppose in the meantime I shall owe dear Henry a great deal of money for printing, &c.

I hope Mrs. Fletcher will indulge herself with S. and S. If I *am* to stay in H. S., and if you should be writing home soon, I wish you would be so good as to give a hint of it, for I am not likely to

write there again these ten days, having written yesterday.

Fanny has set her heart upon its being a Mr. Brett who is going to marry a Miss Dora Best, of this country. I dare say Henry has no objection. Pray, where did the boys sleep?

The Deedes come here on Monday to stay till Friday, so that we shall end with a flourish the last canto. They bring Isabella and one of the grown-ups, and will come in for a Canty. ball on Thursday. I shall be glad to see them. Mrs. Deedes and I must talk rationally together, I suppose.

Edward does not write to Henry, because of my writing so often. God bless you. I shall be so glad to see you again, and I wish you many happy returns of this day. Poor Lord Howard! How he does cry about it!

Yours very truly,

J. A.

Miss Austen,

10 Henrietta St., Covent Garden, London.

To Cassandra Austen

GODMERSHAM PARK, *Saturday* (Nov. 6), 1813.

MY DEAR CASSANDRA,

Having half-an-hour before breakfast (very snug, in my own room, lovely morning, excellent fire—fancy me!) I will give you some account of the last two days. And yet, what is there to be told? I shall get foolishly minute unless I cut the matter short.

We met only the Bretons at Chilham Castle, besides a Mr. and Mrs. Osborne and a Miss Lee staying in the house, and were only fourteen altogether. My brother and Fanny thought it the pleasantest party they had ever known there, and I was very well entertained by bits and scraps. I had long wanted to see Dr. Breton, and his wife amuses me very much with her affected refinement and elegance. Miss Lee I found very conversable ; she admires Crabbe as she ought. She is at an age of reason, ten years older than myself at least. She was at the famous ball at Chilham Castle, so of course you remember her.

By-the-bye, as I must leave off being young, I find many *douceurs* in being a sort of *chaperon*, for I am put on the sofa near the fire, and can drink as much wine as I like. We had music in the evening : Fanny and Miss Wildman played, and Mr. James Wildman sat close by and listened, or pretended to listen.

Yesterday was a day of dissipation all through : first came Sir Brook to dissipate us before breakfast ; then there was a call from Mr. Sherer, then a regular morning visit from Lady Honeywood in her way home from Eastwell ; then Sir Brook and Edward set off ; then we dined (five in number) at half-past four ; then we had coffee ; and at six Miss Clewes, Fanny, and I drove away. We had a beautiful night for our frisks. We were earlier than we need have been, but after a time Lady B. and her two companions appeared—we had kept places for them ;

and there we sat, all six in a row, under a side wall, I between Lucy Foote and Miss Clewes.

Lady B. was much what I expected ; I could not determine whether she was rather handsome or very plain. I liked her for being in a hurry to have the concert over and get away, and for getting away at last with a great deal of decision and promptness, not waiting to compliment and dawdle and fuss about seeing *dear Fanny*, who was half the evening in another part of the room with her friends the Plumptres. I am growing too minute, so I will go to breakfast.

When the concert was over, Mrs. Harrison and I found each other out, and had a very comfortable little complimentary friendly chat. She is a sweet woman—still quite a sweet woman in herself, and so like her sister ! I could almost have thought I was speaking to Mrs. Lefroy. She introduced me to her daughter, whom I think pretty, but most dutifully inferior to *la Mère Beauté*. The Faggs and the Hammonds were there—Wm. Hammond the only young man of renown. *Miss* looked very handsome, but I prefer her little smiling flirting sister Julia.

I was just introduced at last to Mary Plumptre, but should hardly know her again. She was delighted with *me*, however, good enthusiastic soul ! And Lady B. found me handsomer than she expected, so you see I am not so very bad as you might think for.

It was 12 before we reached home. We were all

dog-tired, but pretty well to-day ; Miss Clewes says she has not caught cold, and Fanny's does not seem worse. I was so tired that I began to wonder how I should get through the ball next Thursday ; but there will be so much more variety then in walking about, and probably so much less heat, that perhaps I may not feel it more. My China crape is still kept for the ball. Enough of the concert.

I had a letter from Mary yesterday. They travelled down to Cheltenham last Monday very safely, and are certainly to be there a month. Bath is still Bath. The H. Bridges' must quit them early next week, and Louisa seems not quite to despair of their all moving together, but to those who see at a distance there appears no chance of it. Dr. Parry does not want to keep Lady B. at Bath when she can once move. That is lucky. You will see poor Mr. Evelyn's death.

Since I wrote last, my 2nd edit. has stared me in the face. Mary tells me that Eliza means to buy it. I wish she may. It can hardly depend upon any more Fyfield Estates. I cannot help hoping that *many* will feel themselves obliged to buy it. I shall not mind imagining it a disagreeable duty to them, so as they do it. Mary heard before she left home that it was very much admired at Cheltenham, and that it was given to Miss Hamilton. It is pleasant to have such a respectable writer named. I cannot tire *you*, I am sure, on this subject, or I would apologise.

What weather, and what news ! We have enough

to do to admire them both. I hope you derive your full share of enjoyment from each.

I have extended my lights and increased my acquaintance a good deal within these two days. Lady Honeywood you know ; I did not sit near enough to be a perfect judge, but I thought her extremely pretty, and her manners have all the recommendations of ease and good humour and unaffectedness ; and, going about with four horses and nicely dressed herself, she is altogether a perfect sort of woman.

Oh, and I saw Mr. Gipps last night—the useful Mr. Gipps, whose attentions came in as acceptably to us in handing us to the carriage, for want of a better man, as they did to Emma Plumptre. I thought him rather a good-looking little man.

I long for your letter to-morrow, particularly that I may know my fate as to London. My first wish is that Henry should really choose what he likes best ; I shall certainly not be sorry if he does not want me. Morning church to-morrow ; I shall come back with impatient feelings.

The Sherers are gone, but the Pagets are not come ; we shall therefore have Mr. S. again. Mr. Paget acts like an unsteady man. Dr. Mant, however, gives him a very good character ; what is wrong is to be imputed to the lady. I dare say the house likes female government.

I have a nice long black and red letter from Charles, but not communicating much that I did not know.

There is some chance of a good ball next week,

as far as females go. Lady Bridges may perhaps be there with some Knatchbulls. Mrs. Harrison, perhaps, with Miss Oxenden and the Miss Papillons ; and if Mrs. Harrison, then Lady Fagg will come.

The shades of evening are descending, and I resume my interesting narrative. Sir Brook and my brother came back about four, and Sir Brook almost immediately set forward again to Goodnestone. We are to have Edwd. B. to-morrow, to pay us another Sunday's visit—the last, for more reasons than one ; they all come home on the same day that we go. The Deedes do not come till Tuesday ; Sophia is to be the comer. She is a disputable beauty that I want much to see. Lady Eliz. Hatton and Annamaria called here this morning. Yes, they called ; but I do not think I can say anything more about them. They came, and they sat, and they went.

Sunday.—Dearest Henry ! What a turn he has for being ill, and what a thing bile is ! This attack has probably been brought on in part by his previous confinement and anxiety ; but, however it came, I hope it is going fast, and that you will be able to send a very good account of him on Tuesday. As I hear on Wednesday, of course I shall not expect to hear again on Friday. Perhaps a letter to Wrotham would not have an ill effect.

We are to be off on Saturday before the post comes in, as Edward takes his own horses all the way. He talks of 9 o'clock. We shall bait at Lenham.

Excellent sweetness of you to send me such a nice long letter ; it made its appearance, with one from

my mother, soon after I and my impatient feelings walked in. How glad I am that I did what I did ! I was only afraid that *you* might think the offer superfluous, but you have set my heart at ease. Tell Henry that I *will* stay with him, let it be ever so disagreeable to him.

Oh, dear me ! I have not time on paper for half that I want to say. There have been two letters from Oxford—one from George yesterday. They got there very safely—Edwd. two hours behind the coach, having lost his way in leaving London. George writes cheerfully and quietly ; hopes to have Utterson's rooms soon ; went to lecture on Wednesday, states some of his expenses, and concludes with saying, " I am afraid I shall be poor." I am glad he thinks about it so soon. I believe there is no private tutor yet chosen, but my brother is to hear from Edwd. on the subject shortly.

You, and Mrs. H., and Catherine, and Alethea going about together in Henry's carriage seeing sights—I am not used to the idea of it yet. All that you are to see of Streatham, seen already ! Your Streatham and my Bookham may go hang. The prospect of being taken down to Chawton by Henry perfects the plan to me. I was in hopes of your seeing some illuminations, and you *have* seen them. " I thought you would come, and you *did* come." I am sorry *he* is not to *come* from the Baltic sooner. Poor Mary !

My brother has a letter from Louisa to-day of an unwelcome nature ; they are to spend the winter at

Bath. It was just decided on. Dr. Parry wished it, not from thinking the water necessary to Lady B., but so that he might be better able to judge how far his treatment of her, which is totally different from anything she had been used to, is right ; and I suppose he will not mind having a few more of her Ladyship's guineas. His system is a lowering one. He took twelve ounces of blood from her when the gout appeared, and forbids wine, &c. Hitherto, the plan agrees with her. *She* is very well satisfied to stay, but it is a sore disappointment to Louisa and Fanny.

The H. Bridges leave them on Tuesday, and they mean to move into a smaller house ; you may guess how Edward feels. There can be no doubt of his going to Bath now ; I should not wonder if he brought Fanny Cage back with him.

You shall hear from me once more, some day or other.

Yours very affectionately,
J. A.

We do not like Mr. Hampson's scheme.

Miss Austen,
10 Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, London.

To Cassandra Austen

HENRIETTA STREET, *Wednesday (March 9), 1814.*

Well, we went to the play again last night, and as we were out a great part of the morning too, shopping, and seeing the Indian jugglers, I am very

glad to be quiet now till dressing time. We are to dine at the 'Tilsons', and to-morrow at Mr. Spencer's.

We had not done breakfast yesterday when Mr. J. Plumptre appeared to say that he had secured a box. Henry asked him to dine here, which I fancy he was very happy to do, and so at five o'clock we four sat down to table together while the master of the house was preparing for going out himself. The "Farmer's Wife" is a musical thing in three acts, and, as Edward was steady in not staying for anything more, we were at home before ten.

Fanny and Mr. J. P. are delighted with Miss S., and her merit in singing is, I dare say, very great ; that she gave *me* no pleasure is no reflection upon her, nor, I hope, upon myself, being what Nature made me on that article. All that I am sensible of in Miss S. is a pleasing person and no skill in acting. We had Mathews, Liston, and Emery ; of course, some amusement.

Our friends were off before half-past eight this morning, and had the prospect of a heavy cold journey before them. I think they both liked their visit very much. I am sure Fanny did. Henry sees decided attachment between her and his new acquaintance.

I have a cold, too, as well as my mother and Martha. Let it be a generous emulation between us which can get rid of it first.

I wear my gauze gown to-day, long sleeves and all. I shall see how they succeed, but as yet I have no

reason to suppose long sleeves are allowable. I have lowered the bosom, especially at the corners, and plaited black satin ribbon round the top. Such will be my costume of vine-leaves and paste.

Prepare for a play the very first evening, I rather think Covent Garden, to see Young in "Richard." I have answered for your little companion's being conveyed to Keppel St. immediately. I have never yet been able to get there myself, but hope I shall soon.

What cruel weather this is! and here is Lord Portsmouth married, too, to Miss Hanson.

Henry has finished "Mansfield Park," and his approbation has not lessened. He found the last half of the last volume *extremely interesting*.

I suppose my mother recollects that she gave me no money for paying Brecknell and Twining, and my funds will not supply enough.

We are home in such good time that I can finish my letter to-night, which will be better than getting up to do it to-morrow, especially as, on account of my cold, which has been very heavy in my head this evening, I rather think of lying in bed later than usual. I would not but be well enough to go to Hertford St. on any account.

We met only Genl. Chowne to-day, who has not much to say for himself. I was ready to laugh at the remembrance of Frederick, and such a different Frederick as we chose to fancy him to the real Christopher!

Mrs. Tilson had long sleeves, too, and she assured

me that they are worn in the evening by many. I was glad to hear this. She dines here, I believe, next Tuesday.

On Friday we are to be snug with only Mr. Barlow and an evening of business. I am so pleased that the mead is brewed. Love to all. I have written to Mrs. Hill, and care for nobody.

Yours affectionately,
J. AUSTEN.

Miss Austen, Chawton.

By favour of Mr. Gray.

To Cassandra Austen

HANS PLACE, *Sunday* (Nov. 26), 1815.

MY DEAREST,

The parcel arrived safely, and I am much obliged to you for your trouble. It cost 2s. 10d., but, as there is a certain saving of 2s. 4½d. on the other side, I am sure it is well worth doing. I send four pair of silk stockings, but I do not want them washed at present. In the three neck-handkerchiefs I include the one sent down before. These things, perhaps, Edwd. may be able to bring, but even if he is not, I am extremely pleased with his returning to you from Steventon. It is much better; far preferable.

I *did* mention the P. R.¹ in my note to Mr. Murray; it brought me a fine compliment in return. Whether

¹ Prince Regent. Said to have been a great admirer of her work.

it has done any good I do not know, but Henry thought it worth trying.

The printers continue to supply me very well. I am advanced in Vol. III. to my *arra*-root, upon which peculiar style of spelling there is a modest query in the margin. I will not forget Anna's arrowroot. I hope you have told Martha of my first resolution of letting nobody know that I *might* dedicate, &c., for fear of being obliged to do it, and that she is thoroughly convinced of my being influenced now by nothing but the most mercenary motives. I have paid nine shillings on her account to Miss Palmer ; there was no more owing.

Well, we were very busy all yesterday ; from half-past 11 till 4 in the streets, working almost entirely for other people, driving from place to place after a parcel for Sandling, which we could never find, and encountering the miseries of Grafton House to get a purple frock for Eleanor Bridges. We got to Keppel St., however, which was all I cared for, and though we could stay only a quarter-of-an-hour, Fanny's calling gave great pleasure, and her sensibility still greater, for she was very much affected at the sight of the children. Poor little F. looked heavy. We saw the whole party.

Aunt Harriet hopes Cassy will not forget to make a pincushion for Mrs. Kelly, as *she* has spoken of its being promised her several times. I hope we shall see Aunt H. and the dear little girls here on Thursday.

So much for the morning. Then came the dinner

and Mr. Haden, who brought good manners and clever conversation. From 7 to 8 the harp ; at 8 Mrs. L. and Miss E. arrived, and for the rest of the evening the drawing-room was thus arranged : on the sofa side the two ladies, Henry, and myself, making the best of it ; on the opposite side Fanny and Mr. Haden, in two chairs (I *believe*, at least, they had *two* chairs), talking together uninterruptedly. Fancy the scene ! And what is to be fancied next ? Why, that Mr. H. dines here again to-morrow. To-day we are to have Mr. Barlow. Mr. H. is rearing " Mansfield Park " for the first time, and prefers it to P. and P.

A hare and four rabbits from Gm. yesterday, so that we are stocked for nearly a week. Poor Farmer Andrews ! I am very sorry for him, and sincerely wish his recovery.

A better account of the sugar than I could have expected. I should like to help you break some more. I am glad you cannot wake early ; I am sure you must have been under great arrears of rest.

Fanny and I have been to B. Chapel, and walked back with Maria Cuthbert. We have been very little plagued with visitors this last week. I remember only Miss Herries, the aunt, but I am in terror for to-day, a fine bright Sunday ; plenty of mortar, and nothing to do.

Henry gets out in his garden every day, but at present his inclination for doing more seems over, nor has he now any plan for leaving London before Dec. 18, when he thinks of going to Oxford for a few

days ; to-day, indeed, his feelings are for continuing where he is through the next two months.

One knows the uncertainty of all this, but, should it be so, we must think the best, and hope the best, and do the best ; and my idea in that case is, that when *he* goes to Oxford *I* should go home, and have nearly a week of you before *you* take my place. This is only a silent project, you know, to be gladly given up if better things occur. Henry calls himself stronger every day, and Mr. H. keeps on approving his pulse, which seems generally better than ever, but still they will not let him be well. Perhaps when Fanny is gone he will be allowed to recover faster.

I am not disappointed : I never thought the little girl at Wyards very pretty, but she will have a fine complexion and curly hair, and pass for a beauty. We are glad the mamma's cold has not been worse, and send her our love and good wishes by every convenient opportunity. Sweet, amiable Frank ! why doesn't *he* have a cold too ! Like Captain Mirvan to Mr. Duval,¹ " I wish it well over with him."

Fanny has heard all that I have said to you about herself and Mr. H. Thank you very much for the sight of dearest Charles's letter to yourself. How pleasantly and how naturally he writes ! and how perfect a picture of his disposition and feelings his style conveys ! Poor dear fellow ! Not a present ! I have a great mind to send him all the twelve copies which were to have been dispersed among my near

¹ Characters in Fanny Burney's " *Evelina*."

connections, beginning with the P. R. and ending with Countess Morley. Adieu.

Yours affectionately,

J. AUSTEN.

Give my love to Cassy and Mary Jane. Caroline will be gone when this reaches you.

Miss Austen.

To Cassandra Austen

HANS PLACE, *Saturday* (Dec. 2), 1815.

MY DEAR CASSANDRA,

Henry came back yesterday, and might have returned the day before if he had known as much in time. I had the pleasure of hearing from Mr. T. on Wednesday night that Mr. Seymour thought there was not the least occasion for his absenting himself any longer.

I had also the comfort of a few lines on Wednesday morning from Henry himself, just after your letter was gone, giving so good an account of his feelings as made me perfectly easy. He met with the utmost care and attention at Hanwell, spent his two days there very quietly and pleasantly, and, being certainly in no respect the worse for going, we may believe that he must be better, as he is quite sure of being himself. To make his return a complete gala Mr. Haden was secured for dinner. I need not say that our evening was agreeable.

But you seem to be under a mistake as to Mr. H. You call him an apothecary. He is no apothecary ;

he has never been an apothecary ; there is not an apothecary in this neighbourhood—the only inconvenience of the situation perhaps—but so it is ; we have not a medical man within reach. He is a Haden, nothing but a Haden, a sort of wonderful nondescript creature on two legs, something between a man and an angel, but without the least spice of an apothecary. He is, perhaps, the only person *not* an apothecary hereabouts. He has never sung to us. He will not sing without a pianoforte accompaniment.

Mr. Meyers gives his three lessons a week, altering his days and his hours, however, just as he chooses, never very punctual, and never giving good measure. I have not Fanny's fondness for masters, and Mr. Meyers does not give me any longing after them. The truth is, I think, that they are all, at least music-masters, made of too much consequence and allowed to take too many liberties with their scholars' time.

We shall be delighted to see Edward on Monday, only sorry that you must be losing him. A turkey will be equally welcome with himself. He must prepare for his own proper bedchamber here, as Henry moved down to the one below last week ; he found the other cold.

I am sorry my mother has been suffering, and am afraid this exquisite weather is too good to agree with her. *I* enjoy it all over me, from top to toe, from right to left, longitudinally, perpendicularly, diagonally ; and I cannot but selfishly hope we are

to have it last till Christmas—nice, unwholesome, unseasonable, relaxing, close, muggy weather.

Oh, thank you very much for your long letter ; it did me a great deal of good. Henry accepts your offer of making his nine gallon of mead thankfully. The mistake of the dogs rather vexed him for a moment, but he has not thought of it since. To-day he makes a third attempt at his strengthening plaister, and, as I am sure he will now be getting out a great deal, it is to be wished that he may be able to keep it on. He sets off this morning by the Chelsea coach to sign bonds and visit Henrietta St., and I have no doubt will be going every day to Henrietta St.

Fanny and I were very snug by ourselves as soon as we were satisfied about our invalid's being safe at Hanwell. By manœuvring and good luck we foiled all the Malings' attempts upon us. Happily I caught a little cold on Wednesday, the morning we were in town, which we made very useful, and we saw nobody but our precious and Mr. Tilson.

This evening the Malings are allowed to drink tea with us. We are in hopes—that is, we *wish*—Miss Palmer and the little girls may come this morning. You know, of course, that she could *not* come on Thursday, and she will not attempt to *name* any other day.

God bless you. Excuse the shortness of this, but I must finish it now that I may save you *2d*. Best love.

Yours affectionately,

J. A.

It strikes me that I have no business to give the P. R. a binding, but we will take counsel upon the question.

I am glad you have put the flounce on your chintz; I am sure it must look particularly well, and it is what I had thought of.

Miss Austen, Chawton, Alton, Hants.

PART II

LETTERS

To Martha Lloyd

STEVENTON, *Wed. evening, Nov. 12, 1800.*

MY DEAREST MARTHA,

I did not receive your note yesterday till after Charlotte had left Deane, or I would have sent my answer by her, instead of being the means, as I now must be, of lessening the elegance of your new dress for the Hurstbourne Ball by the value of 3*d*. You are very good in wishing to see me at Ibthorp so soon, and I am equally good in wishing to come to you. I believe our merit in that respect is much upon a par, our self-denial mutually strong. Having paid this tribute of praise to the virtue of both, I shall here have done with panegyric, and proceed to plain matter of fact. In about a fortnight's time I hope to be with you. I have two reasons for not being able to come before. I wish so to arrange my visit as to spend some days with you after your mother's return. In the 1st place that I may have the pleasure of seeing her, and in the 2nd that I may have a better chance of bringing you back with me. Your promise in my favour was not quite absolute, but if your will is not perverse, you and I will do all in our power to overcome your scruples of

conscience. I hope we shall meet next week to talk all this over, till we have tired ourselves with the very idea of my visit before my visit begins. Our invitations for the nineteenth are arrived, and very curiously are they worded. Mary mentioned to you yesterday poor Earle's unfortunate accident, I dare say. He does not seem to be going on very well. The two or three last posts have brought less and less favourable accounts of him. John Harwood has gone to Gosport again to-day. We have two families now who are in a most anxious state ; for though by a note from Catherine this morning, there seems now to be a revival of hope at Manydown, its continuance may be too reasonably doubted. Mr. Heathcote, however, who has broken the same bone of his leg, is so good as to be going on very well. It would be really too much to have three people to care for.

You distress me cruelly by your request about books. I cannot think of any to bring with me, nor have I any idea of our wanting them. I come to you to be talked to, not to read or hear reading ; I can do that at home ; and indeed I am now laying in a stock of intelligence to pour out on you, as my share of the conversation. I am reading Henry's "History of England," which I will repeat to you in any manner you may prefer ; either in a loose, desultory, unconnected stream, or dividing my recital, as the historian divides it himself, into seven parts :—the Civil and Military : Religion : Constitution : Learning and Learned Men : Arts and Sciences : Commerce, Coins, and Shipping : and Manners.

So that for every evening in the week there will be a different subject. The Friday's lot—Commerce, Coins, and Shipping—you will find the least entertaining ; but the next evening's portion will make amends. With such a provision on my part, if you will do yours by repeating the French grammar, and Mrs. Stent will now and then ejaculate some wonder about the cocks and hens, what can we want ? Farewell for a short time. We all unite in best love, and I am your very affectionate

J. A.

To Francis Austen

GREEN PARK BUILDINGS, *Monday, January 21, 1805.*

MY DEAREST FRANK,

I have melancholy news to relate, and sincerely feel for your feelings under the shock of it. I wish I could better prepare you for it, but, having said so much, your mind will already foretell the sort of event which I have to communicate. Our dear father has closed his virtuous and happy life in a death almost as free from suffering as his children could have wished. He was taken ill on Saturday morning, exactly in the same way as heretofore—an oppression in the head, with fever, violent tremulousness, and the greatest degree of feebleness. The same remedy of cupping, which had before been so successful, was immediately applied to, but without such happy effects. The attack was more violent, and at first he seemed scarcely at all relieved by the

operation. Towards the evening, however, he got better, had a tolerable night, and yesterday morning was so greatly amended as to get up, join us at breakfast as usual, and walk about with the help of a stick ; and every symptom was then so favourable that, when Bowen saw him at one, he felt sure of his doing perfectly well. But as the day advanced all these comfortable appearances gradually changed, the fever grew stronger than ever, and when Bowen saw him at ten at night he pronounced his situation to be most alarming. At nine this morning he came again, and by his desire a physician was called in, Dr. Gibbs. But it was then absolutely a lost case. Dr. Gibbs said that nothing but a miracle could save him, and about twenty minutes after ten he drew his last gasp. Heavy as is the blow, we can already feel that a thousand comforts remain to us to soften it. Next to that of the consciousness of his worth and constant preparation for another world, is the remembrance of his having suffered, comparatively speaking, nothing. Being quite insensible of his own state, he was spared all pain of separation, and he went off almost in his sleep. My mother bears the shock as well as possible ; she was quite prepared for it, and feels all the blessing of his being spared a long illness. My uncle and aunt have been with us, and show us every imaginable kindness. And tomorrow we shall, I dare say, have the comfort of James' presence, as an express has been sent for him. We write also, of course, to Godmersham and Brompton. Adieu, my dearest Frank. The loss of

such a parent must be felt, or we should be brutes. I wish I could give you a better preparation, but it has been impossible.

Yours ever affectionately,
J. A.

To Francis Austen

GREEN PARK BUILDINGS,

Tuesday Evening, January 22, 1805.

MY DEAREST FRANK,

I wrote to you yesterday, but your letter to Cassandra this morning, by which we learn the probability of your being by this time at Portsmouth, obliges me to write to you again, having, unfortunately, a communication as necessary as painful to make to you. Your affectionate heart will be greatly wounded, and I wish the shock could have been lessened by a better preparation ; but the event has been sudden, and so must be the information of it. We have lost an excellent father. An illness of only eight and forty hours carried him off yesterday morning between ten and eleven. He was seized on Saturday with a return of the feverish complaint which he had been subject to for the last three years—evidently a more violent attack from the first, as the applications which had before produced almost immediate relief seemed for some time to afford him scarcely any. On Sunday, however, he was much better—so much so as to make Bowen quite easy, and give us every hope of his being well again in a

few days. But these hopes gradually gave way as the day advanced, and when Bowen saw him at ten that night he was greatly alarmed. A physician was called in yesterday morning, but he was at that time past all possibility of cure ; and Dr. Gibbs and Mr. Bowen had scarcely left his room before he sunk into a sleep from which he never awoke. Everything, I trust and believe, was done for him that was possible. It has been very sudden. Within twenty-four hours of his death he was walking about with only the help of a stick—was even reading. We had, however, some hours of preparation, and when we understood his recovery to be hopeless, most fervently did we pray for the speedy release which ensued. To have seen him languishing long, struggling for hours, would have been dreadful—and, thank God, we were all spared from it. Except the restlessness and confusion of high fever, he did not suffer, and he was mercifully spared from knowing that he was about to quit objects so beloved and so fondly cherished as his wife and children ever were. His tenderness as a father, who can do justice to ? My mother is tolerably well ; she bears up with the greatest fortitude, but I fear her health must suffer under such a shock. An express was sent for James, and he arrived here this morning before eight o'clock. The funeral is to be on Saturday at Walcot Church. The serenity of the corpse is most delightful. It preserves the sweet, benevolent smile which always distinguished him. They kindly press my mother to remove to Steventon as soon as it is all over, but

I do not believe she will leave Bath at present. We must have this house for three months longer, and here we shall probably stay till the end of that time. We all unite in love, and I am

Affectionately yours,

J. A.

To Francis Austen

GREEN PARK BUILDINGS,

Tuesday, January 29, 1805.

MY DEAREST FRANK,

My mother has found among our dear father's little personal property a small astronomical instrument, which she hopes you will accept for his sake. It is, I believe, a compass and sun-dial, and is in a black shagreen case. Would you have it sent to you now—and with what direction? There is also a pair of scissors for you. We hope these are articles that may be useful to you, but we are sure they will be valuable. I have not time for more.

Yours very affectionately,

J. A.

To Francis Austen

CHAWTON, *July 3, 1813.*

MY DEAREST FRANK,

Behold me going to write you as handsome a letter as I can! Wish me good luck. We have had the pleasure of hearing from you lately through Mary, who sent us some of the particulars of yours

of June 18 (I think), written off Rugen, and we enter into the delight of your having so good a pilot. Why are you like Queen Elizabeth? Because you know how to chuse wise ministers. Does not this prove you as great a Captain as she was a Queen? This may serve as a riddle for you to put forth among your officers, by way of increasing your proper consequence. It must be a real enjoyment to you, since you are obliged to leave England, to be where you are, seeing something of a new country and one which has been so distinguished as Sweden. You must have great pleasure in it. I hope you may have gone to Carlsroon. Your profession has its *douceurs* to recompense for some of its privations; to an enquiring and observing mind like yours such *douceurs* must be considerable. Gustavus Vasa, and Charles XII., and Cristina and Linneus. Do their ghosts rise up before you? I have a great respect for former Sweden, so zealous as it was for Protestantism. And I have always fancied it more like England than other countries; and, according to the map, many of the names have a strong resemblance to the English. July begins unpleasantly with us, cold and showery, but it is often a baddish month. We had some fine dry weather preceding it, which was very acceptable to the Holders of Hay, and the Masters of Meadows. In general it must have been a good hay-making season. Edward has got in all his in excellent order; I speak only of Chawton, but here he has better luck than Mr. Middleton ever had in the five years that he was tenant. Good

encouragement for him to come again, and I really hope he will do so another year. The pleasure to us of having them here is so great that if we were not the best creatures in the world we should not deserve it. We go on in the most comfortable way, very frequently dining together, and always meeting in some part of every day. Edward is very well, and enjoys himself as thoroughly as any Hampshire-born Austen can desire. Chawton is not thrown away upon him. He talks of making a new garden ; the present is a bad one and ill-situated, near Mr. Papillon's. He means to have the new at the top of the lawn behind his own house. We like to have him proving and strengthening his attachment to the place by making it better. He will soon have all his children about him. Edward, George and Charles are collected already, and another week brings Henry and William. It is the custom at Winchester for Georges to come away a fortnight before the holidays, when they are not to return any more ; for fear they should overstudy themselves just at last, I suppose. Really it is a piece of dishonourable accommodation to the Master. We are in hopes of another visit from our true lawful Henry very soon ; he is to be our guest this time. He is quite well, I am happy to say, and does not leave it to my pen, I am sure, to communicate to you the joyful news of his being Deputy Receiver no longer. It is a promotion which he thoroughly enjoys, as well he may ; the work of his own mind. He sends you all his own plans of course. The scheme for

Scotland we think an excellent one both for himself and his nephew. Upon the whole his spirits are very much recovered. If I may so express myself his mind is not a mind for affliction ; he is too busy, too active, too sanguine. Sincerely as he was attached to poor Eliza moreover, and excellently as he behaved to her, he was always so used to be away from her at times, that her loss is not felt as that of many a beloved wife might be, especially when all the circumstances of her long and dreadful illness are taken into the account. He very long knew that she must die, and it was indeed a release at last. Our mourning for her is not over, or we should be putting it on again for Mr. Thomas Leigh, who has just closed a good life at the age of seventy-nine, and must have died the possessor of one of the finest estates in England, and of more worthless nephews and nieces than any other private man in the United Kingdom. We are very anxious to know who will have the living of Adlestrop, and where his excellent sister will find a home for the remainder of her days. As yet she bears his loss with fortitude, but she has always seemed so wrapped up in him that I fear she must feel it dreadfully when the fever of business is over. There is another female sufferer on the occasion to be pitied. Poor Mrs. L. P. (Leigh Perrot) who would now have been mistress of Stoneleigh had there been none of the vile compromise, which in good truth has never been allowed to be of much use to them. It will be a hard trial. Charles' little girls were with us about a month, and had so

endeared themselves that we were quite sorry to have them go. They are now all at South End together. Why do I mention that ? As if Charles did not write himself. I hate to be spending my time so needlessly, encroaching too upon the rights of others. I wonder whether you happened to see Mr. Blackall's marriage in the papers last January. We did. He was married at Clifton to a Miss Lewis, whose father had been late of Antigua. I should very much like to know what sort of a woman she is. He was a piece of perfection — noisy perfection — himself, which I always recollect with regard. We had noticed a few months before his succeeding to a College living, the very living which we recollected his talking of, and wishing for ; an exceeding good one, Great Cadbury in Somersetshire. I could wish Miss Lewis to be of a silent turn and rather ignorant, but naturally intelligent and wishing to learn, fond of cold veal pies, green tea in the afternoon, and a green window-blind at night.

You will be glad to hear that every copy of S. and S. is sold, and that it has brought me £140, besides the copyright, if that should ever be of any value. I have now, therefore, written myself into £250, which only makes me long for more. I have something in hand which I hope the credit of P. and P. will sell well, though not half so entertaining, and by the bye shall you object to my mentioning the *Elephant* in it, and two or three other old ships ? I *have* done it, but it shall not stay to make you angry. They are only just mentioned.

July 6.—I have kept open my letter on the chance of what Tuesday's post might furnish in addition, and it furnishes the likelihood of our keeping our neighbours at the Great House some weeks longer than we expected. Mr. Scudamore, to whom my brother referred, is very decided as to Godmersham not being fit to be inhabited at present. He talks even of two months being necessary to sweeten it, but if we have warm weather I daresay less will do. My brother will probably go down and sniff at it himself, and receive his rents. The rent-day has been postponed already.

We shall be gainers by their stay, but the young people in general are disappointed, and therefore could wish it otherwise. Our cousins, Colonel Thomas Austen and Margaretta, are going as aide-de-camps to Ireland ; and Lord Whitworth goes in their train as Lord-Lieutenant ; good appointments for each. I hope you continue well and brush your hair, but not all off.

Yours very affectionately,

J. A.

To Francis Austen

GODMERSHAM PARK, *September 25, 1813.*

MY DEAREST FRANK,

The 11th of this month brought me your letter, and I assure you I thought it very well worth its two and three-pence. I am very much obliged to you for filling me so long a sheet of paper ; you are a

good one to traffic with in that way, you pay most liberally ; my letter was a scratch of a note compared to yours, and then you write so even, so clear, both in style and penmanship, so much to the point, and give so much intelligence, that it is enough to kill one. I am sorry Sweden is so poor, and my riddle so bad. The idea of a fashionable bathing-place in Mecklenberg ! How can people pretend to be fashionable or to bathe out of England ? Rostock market makes one's mouth water ; our cheapest butcher's meat is double the price of theirs ; nothing under nine-pence all this summer, and I believe upon recollection nothing under ten-pence. Bread has sunk and is likely to sink more, which we hope may make meat sink too. But I have no occasion to think of the price of bread or of meat where I am now ; let me shake off vulgar cares and conform to the happy indifference of East Kent wealth. I wonder whether you and the King of Sweden knew that I was to come to Godmersham with my brother. Yes, I suppose you have received due notice of it by some means or other. I have not been here these four years, so I am sure the event deserves to be talked of before and behind, as well as in the middle. We left Chawton on the 14th, spent two entire days in town, and arrived here on the 17th. My brother, Fanny, Lizzie, Marianne, and I composed this division of the family, and filled his carriage inside and out. Two post-chaises, under the escort of George, conveyed eight more across the country, the chair brought two, two others came on horseback, and the

rest by coach, and so, by one means or another, we all are removed. It puts me in remind of St. Paul's shipwreck, when all are said, by different means, to reach the shore in safety. I left my mother, Cassandra, and Martha well, and have had good accounts of them since. At present they are quite alone, but they are going to be visited by Mrs. Heathcote and Miss Bigg, and to have a few days of Henry's company likewise.

I expect to be here about two months, Edward is to be in Hampshire again in November, and will take me back. I shall be sorry to be in Kent so long without seeing Mary, but I am afraid it must be so. She has very kindly invited me to Deal, but is aware of the great improbability of my being able to get there. It would be a great pleasure to me to see Mary Jane again too, and her brothers, new and old. Charles and his family I *do* hope to see ; they are coming here for a week in October. We were accommodated in Henrietta Street. Henry was so good as to find room for his three nieces and myself in his house. Edward slept at a hotel in the next street. No. 10 is made very comfortable with cleaning and painting, and the Sloane Street furniture. The front room upstairs is an excellent dining and common sitting parlour, and the smaller one behind will sufficiently answer his purpose as a drawing-room. He has no intention of giving large parties of any kind. His plans are all for the comfort of his friends and himself. Madame Bignon and her daughter have a lodging in his neighbourhood,

and come to him as often as he likes, or as they like. Madame B. always markets for him, as she used to do, and, upon our being in the house, was constantly there to do the work. She is wonderfully recovered from the severity of her asthmatic complaint. Of our three evenings in town, one was spent at the Lyceum, and another at Covent Garden. "The Clandestine Marriage" was the most respectable of the performances, the rest were sing-song and trumpery; but it did very well for Lizzy and Marianne, who were indeed delighted, but I wanted better acting. There was no actor worth naming. I believe the theatres are thought at a very low ebb at present. Henry has probably sent you his own account of his visit in Scotland. I wish he had had more time, and could have gone further north, and deviated to the lakes in his way back; but what he was able to do seems to have afforded him great enjoyment, and he met with scenes of higher beauty in Roxburghshire than I had supposed the South of Scotland possessed. Our nephew's gratification was less keen than our brother's. Edward is no enthusiast in the beauties of nature. His enthusiasm is for the sports of the field only. He is a very promising and pleasing young man however, upon the whole, behaves with great propriety to his father, and great kindness to his brothers and sisters, and we must forgive his thinking more of grouse and partridges than lakes and mountains. He and George are out every morning either shooting or with the harriers. They are good shots. Just at present I

am mistress and miss altogether here, Fanny being gone to Goodnestone for a day or two, to attend the famous fair, which makes its yearly distribution of gold paper and coloured persian through all the family connections. In this house there is a constant succession of small events, somebody is always going or coming ; this morning we had Edward Bridges unexpectedly to breakfast with us, on his way from Ramsgate, where is his wife, to Lenham, where is his church, and to-morrow he dines and sleeps here on his return. They have been all the summer at Ramsgate for her health ; she is a poor honey—the sort of woman who gives me the idea of being determined never to be well and who likes her spasms and nervousness, and the consequence they give her, better than anything else. This is an ill-natured statement to send all over the Baltic. The Mr. Knatchbulls, dear Mrs. Knight's brothers, dined here the other day. They came from the Friars, which is still on their hands. The elder made many inquiries after you. Mr. Sherer is quite a new Mr. Sherer to me ; I heard him for the first time last Sunday, and he gave us an excellent sermon, a little too eager sometimes in his delivery, but that is to me a better extreme than the want of animation, especially when it evidently comes from the heart, as in him. The clerk is as much like you as ever. I am always glad to see him on that account. But the Sherers are going away. He has a bad curate at Westwell, whom he can eject only by residing there himself. He goes nominally for three years,

and a Mr. Paget is to have the curacy of Godmersham ; a married man, with a very musical wife, which I hope may make her a desirable acquaintance to Fanny.

I thank you very warmly for your kind consent to my application, and the kind hint which followed it. I was previously aware of what I should be laying myself open to ; but the truth is that the secret has spread so far as to be scarcely the shadow of a secret now, and that, I believe, whenever it appears, I shall not even attempt to tell lies, but shall rather try to make all the money that I can of it. People shall pay for their likely, if I can make them. Henry heard P. and praised in Scotland by Lady Robert Kerr and lady ; and what does he do, in the warmth of his brotherly vanity and love, but immediately tell them who wrote it. A thing once set going in that way—one knows how it spreads, and he, dear creature, has set it going so much more than once. I know it is all done from affection and partiality, but at the same time let me here again express to you and Mary my sense of the *superior* kindness which you have shown on the occasion in doing what I wished. I am trying to harden myself. After all, what a trifle it is, in all its bearings, to the really important points of one's existence, even in this world.

I take it for granted that Mary has told you of —'s engagement to —. It came upon us without much preparation ; at the same time there was that about her which kept us in a constant preparation

for something. We are anxious to have it go on well, there being quite as much in his favour as the chances are likely to give her in any matrimonial connection. I believe he is sensible, certainly very religious, well connected, and with some independence. There is an unfortunate dissimilarity of taste between them in one respect, which gives us some apprehensions; he hates company, and she is very fond of it; this, with some queerness of temper on his side, and much unsteadiness on hers, is untoward. I hope Edward's family visit to Chawton, for he yearly; he certainly means it now, but we would not expect it to exceed *two* months in future. I never do not think, however, that he found five too, *never* this summer. He was very happy there. The new paint improves their house much, and we find no evil from the smell. Poor Mr. Trimmer is lately dead, a sad loss to his family, and occasioning some anxiety to our brother; for the present he continues his affairs in the son's hands, a matter of great importance to *them*. I hope he will have no reason to remove his business.

Your very affectionate sister,

J. A.

There is to be a second edition of *S. and S.* Egerton advises it.

*To Charles Austen**Apr. 6, 1817.*

MY DEAREST CHARLES,

Many thanks for your affectionate letter. I was in your debt before, but I have really been too unwell the last fortnight to write anything that was not absolutely necessary. I have been suffering from a bilious attack attended with a good deal of fever. A few days ago my complaint appeared removed, but I am ashamed to say that the shock of my uncle's will brought on a relapse, and I was so ill on Friday and thought myself so likely to be worse that I could not but press for Cassandra's returning with Frank after the funeral last night, which she of course did ; and either her return, or my having seen Mr. Curtis, or my disorder chusing to go away, have made me better this morning. I live upstairs however for the present, and am coddled. I am the only one of the legatees who has been so silly, but a weak body must excuse weak nerves.

My mother has borne the forgetfulness of *her* extremely well—her expectations for herself were never beyond the extreme of moderation, and she thinks with you that my uncle always looked forward to surviving her. She desires her best love, and many thanks for your kind feelings ; and heartily wishes that her younger children had more and all her children something immediately. . . .

Nothing can be kinder than Mrs. Cooke's enquiries after you [and Harriet] in all her letters,

and there was no standing her affectionate way of speaking of *your* countenance, after her seeing you. God bless you all.

Conclude me to be going on well if you hear nothing to the contrary.

Yours ever truly,

J. A.

To Fanny, daughter of Edward [Austen] Knight

CHAWTON, Friday (Nov. 18, 1814).

I feel quite as doubtful as you could be, my dearest Fanny, as to *when* my letter may be finished, for I can command very little quiet time at present ; but yet I must begin, for I know you will be glad to hear as soon as possible, and I really am impatient myself to be writing something on so very interesting a subject, though I have no hope of writing anything to the purpose. I shall do very little more, I dare say, than say over again what you have said before.

I was certainly a good deal surprised *at first*, as I had no suspicion of any change in your feelings, and I have no scruple in saying that you cannot be in love. My dear Fanny, I am ready to laugh at the idea, and yet it is no laughing matter to have had you so mistaken as to your own feelings. And with all my heart I wish I had cautioned you on that point when first you spoke to me ; but, though I did not think you then *much* in love, I did consider you as being attached in a degree quite sufficiently for

happiness, as I had no doubt it would increase with opportunity, and from the time of our being in London together I thought you really very much in love. But you certainly are not at all—there is no concealing it.

What strange creatures we are! It seems as if your being secure of him had made you indifferent. There was a little disgust, I suspect, at the races, and I do not wonder at it. His expressions then would not do for one who had rather more acute-ness, penetration, and taste, than love, which was your case. And yet, after all, I *am* surprised that the change in your feelings should be so great. He is just what he ever was, only more evidently and uniformly devoted to *you*. This is all the difference. How shall we account for it?

My dearest Fanny, I am writing what will not be of the smallest use to you. I am feeling differently every moment, and shall not be able to suggest a single thing that can assist your mind. I could lament in one sentence and laugh in the next, but as to opinion or counsel I am sure that none will be extracted worth having from this letter.

I read yours through the very evening I received it, getting away by myself. I could not bear to leave off when I had once begun. I was full of curiosity and concern. Luckily your At. C. dined at the other house; therefore I had not to manœuvre away from *her*, and as to anybody else, I do not care.

Poor dear Mr. A.! Oh, dear Fanny! your mistake has been one that thousands of women fall

into. He was the *first* young man who attached himself to you. That was the charm, and most powerful it is. Among the multitudes, however, that make the same mistake with yourself, there can be few indeed who have so little reason to regret it ; *his* character and *his* attachment leave you nothing to be ashamed of.

Upon the whole, what is to be done ? You have no inclination for any other person. His situation in life, family, friends, and, above all, his character, his uncommonly amiable mind, strict principles, just notions, good habits, *all* that *you* know so well how to value, *all* that is really of the first importance, —everything of this nature pleads his cause most strongly. You have no doubt of his having superior abilities, he has proved it at the University ; he is, I dare say, such a scholar as your agreeable, idle brothers would ill bear a comparison with.

Oh, my dear Fanny ! the more I write about him the warmer my feelings become—the more strongly I feel the sterling worth of such a young man and the desirableness of your growing in love with him again. I recommend this most thoroughly. There *are* such beings in the world, perhaps one in a thousand, as the creature you and I should think perfection, where grace and spirit are united to worth, where the manners are equal to the heart and understanding, but such a person may not come in your way, or, if he does, he may not be the eldest son of a man of fortune, the near relation of your particular friend and belonging to your own county.

Think of all this, Fanny. Mr. A. has advantages which we do not often meet in one person. His only fault, indeed, seems modesty. If he were less modest he would be more agreeable, speak louder, and look impudenter ; and is not it a fine character of which modesty is the only defect ? I have no doubt he will get more lively and more like yourselves as he is more with you ; he will catch your ways if he belongs to you. And, as to there being any objection from his *goodness*, from the danger of his becoming even evangelical, I cannot admit *that*. I am by no means convinced that we ought not all to be evangelicals, and am at least persuaded that they who are so from reason and feeling must be happiest and safest. Do not be frightened from the connection by your brothers having most wit—wisdom is better than wit, and in the long run will certainly have the laugh on her side ; and don't be frightened by the idea of his acting more strictly up to the precepts of the New Testament than others.

And now, my dear Fanny, having written so much on one side of the question, I shall turn round and entreat you not to commit yourself farther, and not to think of accepting him unless you really do like him. Anything is to be preferred or endured rather than marrying without affection ; and if his deficiencies of manner, &c. &c., strike you more than all his good qualities, if you continue to think strongly of them, give him up at once. Things are now in such a state that you must resolve upon one or the other—either to allow him to go on as he has done,

or whenever you are together behave with a coldness which may convince him that he has been deceiving himself. I have no doubt of his suffering a good deal for a time—a great deal when he feels that he must give you up ; but it is no creed of mine, as you must be well aware, that such sort of disappointments kill anybody.

Your sending the music was an admirable device, it made everything easy, and I do not know how I could have accounted for the parcel otherwise ; for though your dear papa most conscientiously hunted about till he found me alone in the dining-parlour, your Aunt C. had seen that he *had* a parcel to deliver. As it was, however, I do not think anything was suspected.

We have heard nothing fresh from Anna. I trust she is very comfortable in her new home. Her letters have been very sensible and satisfactory, with no *parade* of happiness, which I liked them the better for. I have often known young married women write in a way I did not like in that respect.

You will be glad to hear that the first edition of M. P.¹ is all sold. Your uncle Henry is rather wanting me to come to town to settle about a second edition, but as I could not very conveniently leave home now, I have written him my will and pleasure, and, unless he still urges it, shall not go. I am very greedy and want to make the most of it, but as you are much above caring about money I shall not plague you with any particulars. The pleasures of

¹ " Mansfield Park."

vanity are more within your comprehension, and you will enter into mine at receiving the *praise* which every now and then comes to me through some channel or other.

Saturday.—Mr. Palmer spent yesterday with us, and is gone off with Cassy this morning. We have been expecting Miss Lloyd the last two days, and feel sure of her to-day. Mr. Knight and Mr. Edwd. Knight are to dine with us, and on Monday they are to dine with us again, accompanied by their respectable host and hostess.

Sunday.—Your papa had given me messages to you, but they are unnecessary, as he writes by this post to Aunt Louisa. We had a pleasant party yesterday, at least *we* found it so. It is delightful to see him so cheerful and confident. Aunt Cass. and I dine at the Great House to-day. We shall be a snug half-dozen. Miss Lloyd came, as we expected, yesterday, and desires her love. She is very happy to hear of your learning the harp. I do not mean to send you what I owe Miss Hare, because I think you would rather not be paid beforehand.

Yours very affectionately,

JANE AUSTEN.

Miss Knight,

Goodnestone Farm, Wingham, Kent.

To Fanny, daughter of Edward [Austen] Knight

23 HANS PLACE, *Wednesday (November 30, 1814).*

I am very much obliged to you, my dear Fanny, for your letter, and I hope you will write again soon,

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that I may know you to be all safe and happy at home.

Our visit to Hendon will interest you, I am sure, but I need not enter into the particulars of it, as your papa will be able to answer *almost* every question. I certainly *could* describe her bedroom, and her drawers, and her closet, better than he can, but I do not feel that I can stop to do it. I was rather sorry to hear that she *is* to have an instrument ; it seems throwing money away. They will wish the twenty-four guineas in the shape of sheets and towels six months hence ; and as to her playing, it never can be anything.

Her purple pelisse rather surprised me. I thought we had known all paraphernalia of that sort. I do not mean to blame her ; it looked very well, and I dare say she wanted it. I suspect nothing worse than its being got in secret, and not owned to anybody. I received a very kind note from her yesterday, to ask me to come again and stay a night with them. I cannot do it, but I was pleased to find that she had the *power* of doing so right a thing. My going was to give them *both* pleasure very properly.

I just saw Mr. Hayter at the play, and think his face would please me on acquaintance. I was sorry he did not dine here. It seemed rather odd to me to be in the theatre with nobody to *watch* for. I was quite composed myself, at leisure for all the agitated Isabella could raise.

Now, my dearest Fanny, I will begin a subject which comes in very naturally. You frighten me

out of my wits by your reference. Your affection gives me the highest pleasure, but indeed you must not let anything depend on my opinion ; your own feelings, and none but your own, should determine such an important point. So far, however, as answering your question, I have no scruple. I am perfectly convinced that your present feelings, supposing you were to marry *now*, would be sufficient for his happiness ; but when I think how very, very far it is from a “ *now*,” and take everything that *may be* into consideration, I dare not say, “ Determine to accept him ” ; the risk is too great for *you*, unless your own sentiments prompt it.

You will think me perverse perhaps ; in my last letter I was urging everything in his favour, and now I am inclining the other way, but I cannot help it ; I am at present more impressed with the possible evil that may arise to *you* from engaging yourself to him—in word or mind—than with anything else. When I consider how few young men you have yet seen much of ; how capable you are (yes, I do still think you *very* capable) of being really in love ; and how full of temptation the next six or seven years of your life will probably be (it is the very period of life for the *strongest* attachments to be formed),—I cannot wish you, with your present very cool feelings, to devote yourself in honour to him. It is very true that you never may attach another man his equal altogether ; but if that other man has the power of attaching you *more*, he will be in your eyes the most perfect.

I shall be glad if you *can* revive past feelings, and from your unbiassed self resolve to go on as you have done, but this I do not expect ; and without it I cannot wish you to be fettered. I should not be afraid of your *marrying* him ; with all his worth you would soon love him enough for the happiness of both ; but I should dread the continuance of this sort of tacit engagement, with such an uncertainty as there is of *when* it may be completed. Years may pass before he is independent ; you like him well enough to marry, but not well enough to wait ; the unpleasantness of appearing fickle is certainly great ; but if you think you want punishment for past illusions, there it is, and nothing can be compared to the misery of being bound *without* love—bound to one, and preferring another ; *that* is a punishment which you do *not* deserve.

I know you did not meet, or rather will not meet, to-day, as he called here yesterday ; and I am glad of it. It does not seem very likely, at least, that he should be in time for a dinner visit sixty miles off. We did not see him, only found his card when we came home at four. Your Uncle H. merely observed that he was a day *after* “ *the fair*.” We asked your brother on Monday (when Mr. Hayter was talked of) why he did not invite *him* too ; saying, “ I know he is in town, for I met him the other day in Bond St.” Edward answered that he did not know where he was to be found. “ Don’t you know his chambers ? ” “ No.”

I shall be most glad to hear from you again, my

dearest Fanny, but it must not be later than Saturday, as we shall be off on Monday long before the letters are delivered ; and write *something* that may do to be read or told. I am to take the Miss Moores back on Saturday, and when I return I shall hope to find your pleasant little flowing scrawl on the table. It will be a relief to me after playing at ma'ams, for though I like Miss H. M. as much as one can at my time of life after a day's acquaintance, it is uphill work to be talking to those whom one knows so little.

Only *one* comes back with me to-morrow, probably Miss Eliza, and I rather dread it. We shall not have two ideas in common. She is young, pretty, chattering, and thinking chiefly, I presume, of dress, company, and admiration. Mr. Sanford is to join us at dinner, which will be a comfort, and in the evening, while your uncle and Miss Eliza play chess, he shall tell me comical things and I will laugh at them, which will be a pleasure to both.

I called in Keppel Street and saw them all, including dear Uncle Charles, who is to come and dine with us quietly to-day. Little Harriot sat in my lap, and seemed as gentle and affectionate as ever, and as pretty, except not being quite well. Fanny is a fine stout girl, talking incessantly, with an interesting degree of lisp and indistinctness, and very likely may be the handsomest in time. Cassy did not show more pleasure in seeing me than her sisters, but I expected no better. She does not

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shine in the tender feelings. She will never be a Miss O'Neil, more in the Mrs. Siddons line.

Thank you, but it is not settled yet whether I *do* hazard a second edition. We are to see Egerton to-day, when it will probably be determined. People are more ready to borrow and praise than to buy, which I cannot wonder at ; but though I like praise as well as anybody, I like what Edward calls "*Pewter*," too. I hope he continues careful of his eyes and finds the good effect of it. I cannot suppose we differ in our ideas of the Christian religion. You have given an excellent description of it. We only affix a different meaning to the word *evangelical*.

Yours most affectionately,

J. AUSTEN.

Miss Knight,

Godmersham Park, Faversham, Kent.

To Fanny, daughter of Edward [Austen] Knight

CHAWTON : (Feb. 20, 1817).

MY DEAREST FANNY,

You are inimitable, irresistible. You are the delight of my life. Such letters, such entertaining letters, as you have lately sent ! such a description of your queer little heart ! such a lovely display of what imagination does. You are worth your weight in gold, or even in the new silver coinage. I cannot express to you what I have felt in reading your history of yourself—how full of pity and concern, and admiration and amusement, I have been ! You are the paragon of all that is silly and sensible, common-

place and eccentric, sad and lively, provoking and interesting. Who can keep pace with the fluctuations of your fancy, the capprizios of your taste, the contradictions of your feelings? You are so odd, and all the time so perfectly natural—so peculiar in yourself, and yet so like everybody else!

It is very, very gratifying to me to know you so intimately. You can hardly think what a pleasure it is to me to have such thorough pictures of your heart. Oh, what a loss it will be when you are married! You are too agreeable in your single state—too agreeable as a niece. I shall hate you when your delicious play of mind is all settled down in conjugal and maternal affections.

Mr. B——¹ frightens me. He will have you. I see you at the altar. I have *some* faith in Mrs. C. Cage's observation, and still more in Lizzy's; and, besides, I know it *must* be so. He must be wishing to attach you. It would be too stupid and too shameful in him to be otherwise; and all the family are seeking your acquaintance.

Do not imagine that I have any real objection; I have rather taken a fancy to him than not, and I like the house for you. I only do not like you should marry anybody. And yet I do wish you to marry very much, because I know you will never be happy till you are; but the loss of a Fanny Knight will be never made up to me. My "affec. niece F. C. B——" will be but a poor substitute. I do not like your being nervous, and so apt to

¹ This is another suitor: not the subject of former letters.

cry—it is a sign you are not quite well ; but I hope Mr. Scud—as you always write his name (your Mr. Scuds amuses me very much)—will do you good.

What a comfort that Cassandra should be so recovered ! It was more than we had expected. I can easily believe she was very patient and very good. I always loved Cassandra, for her fine dark eyes and sweet temper. I am almost entirely cured of my rheumatism—just a little pain in my knee now and then, to make me remember what it was, and keep on flannel. Aunt Cassandra nursed me so beautifully.

I enjoy your visit to Goodnestone, it must be a great pleasure to you ; you have not seen Fanny Cage in comfort so long. I hope she represents and remonstrates and reasons with you properly. Why should you be living in dread of his marrying somebody else ? (Yet, how natural !) You did not choose to have him yourself, why not allow him to take comfort where he can ? In your conscience you *know* that he could not bear a companion with a more animated character. You cannot forget how you felt under the idea of its having been possible that he might have dined in Hans Place.

My dearest Fanny, I cannot bear you should be unhappy about him. Think of his principles ; think of his father's objection, of want of money, &c. &c. But I am doing no good ; no, all that I urge against him will rather make you take his part more, sweet, perverse Fanny.

And now I will tell you that we like your Henry

to the utmost, to the very top of the glass, quite brimful. He is a very pleasing young man. I do not see how he could be mended. He does really bid fair to be everything his father and sister could wish ; and William I love very much indeed, and so we do all ; he is quite our own William. In short, we are very comfortable together ; that is, we can answer for *ourselves*.

Mrs. Deedes is as welcome as May to all our benevolence to her son ; we only lamented that we could not do more, and that the 50*l.* note we slipped into his hand at parting was necessarily the limit of our offering. Good Mrs. Deedes ! Scandal and gossip ; yes, I dare say you are well stocked, but I am very fond of Mrs. — for reasons good. Thank you for mentioning her praise of “ Emma,” &c.

I have contributed the marking to Uncle H.’s shirts, and now they are a complete memorial of the tender regard of many.

Friday.—I had no idea when I began this yesterday of sending it before your brother went back, but I have written away my foolish thoughts at such a rate that I will not keep them many hours longer to stare me in the face.

Much obliged for the quadrilles, which I am grown to think pretty enough, though of course they are very inferior to the cotillions of my own day.

Ben and Anna walked here last Sunday to hear Uncle Henry, and she looked so pretty, it was quite a pleasure to see her, so young and so blooming, and so innocent, as if she had never had a wicked thought

in her life, which yet one has some reason to suppose she must have had, if we believe the doctrine of original sin. I hope Lizzy will have her play very kindly arranged for her. Henry is generally thought very good-looking, but not so handsome as Edward. I think I prefer his face. Wm. is in excellent looks, has a fine appetite, and seems perfectly well. You will have a great break up at Godmersham in the spring. You *must* feel their all going. It is very right, however! Poor Miss C.! I shall pity her when she begins to understand herself.

Your objection to the quadrilles delighted me exceedingly. Pretty well, for a lady irrecoverably attached to *one* person! Sweet Fanny, believe no such thing of yourself, spread no such malicious slander upon your understanding within the precincts of your imagination. Do not speak ill of your sense merely for the gratification of your fancy; yours is sense which deserves more honourable treatment. You are *not* in love with him; you never *have* been really in love with him.

Yours very affectionately,

J. AUSTEN.

Miss Knight,

Godmersham Park, Faversham, Kent.

To Fanny, daughter of Edward [Austen] Knight

CHAWTON: Thursday (March 13), 1817.

As to making any adequate return for such a letter as yours, my dearest Fanny, it is absolutely impos-

sible. If I were to labour at it all the rest of my life, and live to the age of Methuselah, I could never accomplish anything so long and so perfect ; but I cannot let William go without a few lines of acknowledgment and reply.

I have pretty well done with Mr. ——. By your description, he *cannot* be in love with you, however he may try at it ; and I could not wish the match unless there were a great deal of love on his side. I do not know what to do about Jemima Branfill. What does her dancing away with so much spirit mean ? That she does not care for *him*, or only wishes to *appear* not to care for him ? Who can understand a young lady ?

Poor Mrs. C. Milles, that she should die on the wrong day at last, after being about it so long ! It was unlucky that the Goodnestone party could not meet you, and I hope her friendly, obliging, social spirit, which delighted in drawing people together, was not conscious of the division and disappointment she was occasioning. I am sorry and surprised that you speak of her as having little to leave, and must feel for Miss Milles, though she *is* Molly, if a material loss of income is to attend her other loss. Single women have a dreadful propensity for being poor, which is one very strong argument in favour of matrimony, but I need not dwell on such arguments with *you*, pretty dear.

To you I shall say, as I have often said before, Do not be in a hurry, the right man will come at last ; you will in the course of the next two or three

years meet with somebody more generally unexceptionable than anyone you have yet known, who will love you as warmly as possible, and who will so completely attract you that you will feel you never really loved before.

Do none of the A.'s ever come to balls now ? You have never mentioned them as being at any. And what do you hear of the Gipps, or of Fanny and her husband ?

Aunt Cassandra walked to Wyards yesterday with Mrs. Digweed. Anna has had a bad cold, and looks pale. She has just weaned Julia.

I have also heard lately from your Aunt Harriot, and cannot understand their plans in parting with Miss S., whom she seems very much to value now that Harriot and Eleanor are both of an age for a governess to be so useful to, especially as, when Caroline was sent to school some years, Miss *Bell* was still retained, though the others even then were nursery children. They had some good reason, I dare say, though I cannot penetrate it, and till I know what it is I shall invent a bad one, and amuse myself with accounting for the difference of measures by supposing Miss S. to be a superior sort of woman, who has never stooped to recommend herself to the master of the family by flattery, as Miss Bell did.

I *will* answer your kind questions more than you expect. "Miss Catherine" is put upon the shelf for the present, and I do not know that she will ever come out ; but I have a something ready for publication, which may, perhaps, appear about

the other servants. She is in love with the man and her head seems rather turned. He returns her affection, but she fancies every one else is wanting him and envying her. Her previous service must have fitted her for such a place as yours, and she is very active and cleanly. The Webbs are really gone ! When I saw the waggons at the door, and thought of all the trouble they must have in moving, I began to reproach myself for not having liked them better, but since the waggons have disappeared my conscience has been closed again, and I am excessively glad they are gone.

I am very fond of Sherlock's sermons and prefer them to almost any.

Your affectionate Aunt,

J. AUSTEN.

To Anna, daughter of James Austen

HANS PLACE (Nov. 28, 1814).

MY DEAR ANNA,

I assure you we all came away very much pleased with our visit. We talked of you for about a mile and a half with great satisfaction ; and I have been just sending a very good report of you to Miss Benn, with a full account of your dress for Susan and Maria.

We were all at the play last night to see Miss O'Neil in "Isabella." I do not think she was quite equal to my expectations. I fancy I want something more than can be. I took two

pocket-handkerchiefs, but had very little occasion for either. She is an elegant creature, however, and hugs Mr. Young delightfully. I am going this morning to see the girls in Keppel Street. Cassy was excessively interested about your marriage when she heard of it, which was not until she was to drink your health on the wedding day.

She asked a thousand questions in her usual manner, what he said to you and what you said to him. If your uncle were at home he would send his best love, but I will not impose any base fictitious remembrances on you, mine I can honestly give, and remain

Your affectionate Aunt,

J. AUSTEN.

To Anna, daughter of James Austen

HANS PLACE (*Wednesday*), 1814.

MY DEAR ANNA,

I have been very far from finding your book an evil, I assure you. I read it immediately, and with great pleasure. I think you are going on very well. The description of Dr. Griffin and Lady Helena's unhappiness is very good, and just what was likely to be. I am curious to know what the end of them will be. The name of Newton Priors is really invaluable; I never met with anything superior to it. It is delightful, and one could live on the name of Newton Priors for a twelvemonth. Indeed, I think you get on very fast. I only wish other people

of my acquaintance could compose as rapidly. I am pleased with the dog scene and with the whole of George and Susan's love, but am more particularly struck with your serious conversations. They are very good throughout. St. Julian's history was quite a surprise to me. You had not very long known it yourself I suspect ; but I have no objection to make to the circumstance, and it is very well told. His having been in love with the aunt gives Cecilia an additional interest with him. I like the idea—a very proper compliment to an aunt ! I rather imagine indeed that nieces are seldom chosen but out of compliment to some aunt or another. I dare-say Ben was in love with me once, and would never have thought of you if he had not supposed me dead of scarlet fever. Yes, I was in a mistake as to the number of books. I thought I had read three before the three at Chawton, but fewer than six will not do. I want to see dear Bell Griffin again ; and had you not better give some hint of St. Julian's early history in the beginning of the story ?

We shall see nothing of Streatham while we are in town, as Mrs. Hill is to lie in of a daughter. Mrs. Blackstone is to be with her. Mrs. Heathcote and Miss Bigg¹ are just leaving. The latter writes me word that Miss Blackford is married, but I have never seen it in the papers, and one may as well be single if the wedding is not to be in print.

Your affectionate Aunt,

J. A.

¹ Sisters to Mrs. Hill.

To Caroline, daughter of James Austen

Dec. 6 [1815].

MY DEAR CAROLINE,

I wish I could finish stories as fast as you can. I am much obliged to you for the sight of Olivia, and think you have done for her very well ; but the good-for-nothing father, who was the real author of all her faults and sufferings, should not escape unpunished. I hope *he* hung himself, or took the surname of *Bone*, or underwent some direful penance or other.

Yours affectionately,

J. AUSTEN.

To Caroline, daughter of James Austen

CHAWTON, July 15.

MY DEAR CAROLINE,

I have followed your directions, and find your handwriting admirable. If you continue to improve as much as you have done, perhaps I may not be obliged to shut my eyes at all half a year hence. I have been very much entertained by your story of Carolina and her aged father ; it made me laugh heartily, and I am particularly glad to find you so much alive upon any topic of such absurdity as the usual description of a heroine's father. You have done it full justice, or, if anything be wanting, it is the information of the venerable old man's having married when only twenty-one, and being a father at twenty-two.

I had an early opportunity of conveying your letter to Mary Jane, having only to throw it out of window at her as she was romping with your brother in the Back Court. She thanks you for it, and answers your questions through me. I am to tell you that she has passed her time at Chawton very pleasantly indeed, that she does not miss Cassy so much as she expected, and that as to "Diana Temple," she is ashamed to say it has never been worked at since you went away. . . .

Edward's visit has been a great pleasure to us. He has not lost one good quality or good look, and is only altered in being improved by being some months older than when we saw him last. He is getting very near our own age, for *we* do not grow older, of course.

Yours affectionately,

JANE AUSTEN.

To Caroline, daughter of James Austen

Jan., 1817.

The Pianoforte often talks of you ; in various keys, tunes, and expressions, I allow—but, be it Lesson or Country Dance, Sonata or Waltz, *you* are really its constant theme. I wish you could come and see us as easily as Edward can. . . .

You send me great news indeed, my dear Caroline, about Mr. Digweed, Mr. Trimmer, and a Grand Pianoforte. I wish it had been a small one, as then you might have pretended that Mr. D.'s rooms

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were too damp to be fit for it, and offered to take charge of it at the Parsonage.

I look forward to the four new chapters with great pleasure. But how can you like Frederick better than Edward? You have some eccentric tastes, however, I know, as to Heroes and Heroines. Good-bye.

Yours affectionately,

JANE AUSTEN.

To Caroline, daughter of James Austen

CHAWTON, *Wed., March 26, 1817.*

MY DEAR CAROLINE,

Pray make no apologies for writing to me often. I am always very happy to hear from you. . . .

I think you very much improved in your writing, and in the way to write a pretty hand. I wish you could practise your fingering oftener. Would not it be a good plan for you to go and live entirely at Mr. Wm. Digweed's? He could not desire any other remuneration than the pleasure of hearing you practise. ~~very much~~

I like Frederick and Caroline better than I did, but I must still prefer Edgar and Julia. Julia is a warm-hearted, ingenuous, natural girl, which I like her for; but I know the word *natural* is no recommendation to you. . . .

How very well Edward is looking! You can have nobody in your neighbourhood to vie with him at all, except Mr. Portal. I have taken one ride on

the donkey and like it very much—and you must try to get me quiet, mild days that I may be able to go out pretty constantly. A great deal of wind does not suit me, as I have still a tendency to rheumatism. In short, I am a poor honey at present. I will be better when you come and see us.

Yours affectionately,

JANE AUSTEN.

To Edward, son of James Austen

MRS. DAVID'S, COLLEGE STREET, WINTON.

Tues., May 27, 1817.

I know no better way, my dearest Edward, of thanking you for your most affectionate concern for me during my illness than by telling you myself, as soon as possible, that I continue to get better. I will not boast of my handwriting ; neither that nor my face have yet recovered their proper beauty, but in other respects I am gaining strength very fast. I am now out of bed from 9 in the morning till 10 at night ; upon the sopha, 'tis true, but I eat my meals with Aunt Cass. in a rational way, and can employ myself, and walk from one room to another. Mr. Lyford says he will cure me, and if he fails, I shall draw up a memorial and lay it before the Dean and Chapter. I have no doubt of redress from that pious, learned, and disinterested body.

Our lodgings are very comfortable. We have a neat little drawing-room with a bow-window overlooking Dr. Gabell's garden. Thanks to the

kindness of your father and mother in sending me their carriage, my journey hither on Saturday was performed with very little fatigue, and had it been a fine day, I think I should have felt none ; but it distressed me to see Uncle Henry and Wm. Knight, who kindly attended us on horseback, riding in the rain almost all the way. We expect a visit from them to-morrow, and hope they will stay the night ; and on Thursday, which is Confirmation and a holiday, we are to get Charles out to breakfast. We have had but one visit yet from *him*, poor fellow, as he is in the sick-room, but he hopes to be out to-night. We see Mrs. Heathcote every day, and William is to call upon us soon. God bless you, my dear Edward. If ever you are ill, may you be as tenderly nursed as I have been. May the same blessed alleviations of anxious, sympathising friends be yours : and may you possess, as I dare say you will, the greatest blessing of all in the consciousness of not being unworthy of their love. *I* could not feel this.

Your very affect^{te} Aunt,

J. A.

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the other servants. She is in love with the man and her head seems rather turned. He returns her affection, but she fancies every one else is wanting him and envying her. Her previous service must have fitted her for such a place as yours, and she is very active and cleanly. The Webbs are really gone ! When I saw the waggons at the door, and thought of all the trouble they must have in moving, I began to reproach myself for not having liked them better, but since the waggons have disappeared my conscience has been closed again, and I am excessively glad they are gone.

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Your affectionate Aunt,

J. AUSTEN.

To Anna, daughter of James Austen

HANS PLACE (Nov. 28, 1814).

MY DEAR ANNA,

I assure you we all came away very much pleased with our visit. We talked of you for about a mile and a half with great satisfaction ; and I have been just sending a very good report of you to Miss Benn, with a full account of your dress for Susan and Maria.

We were all at the play last night to see Miss O'Neil in "Isabella." I do not think she was quite equal to my expectations. I fancy I want something more than can be. I took two

pocket-handkerchiefs, but had very little occasion for either. She is an elegant creature, however, and hugs Mr. Young delightfully. I am going this morning to see the girls in Keppel Street. Cassy was excessively interested about your marriage when she heard of it, which was not until she was to drink your health on the wedding day.

She asked a thousand questions in her usual manner, what he said to you and what you said to him. If your uncle were at home he would send his best love, but I will not impose any base fictitious remembrances on you, mine I can honestly give, and remain

Your affectionate Aunt,

J. AUSTEN.

To Anna, daughter of James Austen

HANS PLACE (*Wednesday*), 1814.

MY DEAR ANNA,

I have been very far from finding your book an evil, I assure you. I read it immediately, and with great pleasure. I think you are going on very well. The description of Dr. Griffin and Lady Helena's unhappiness is very good, and just what was likely to be. I am curious to know what the end of them will be. The name of Newton Priors is really invaluable ; I never met with anything superior to it. It is delightful, and one could live on the name of Newton Priors for a twelvemonth. Indeed, I think you get on very fast. I only wish other people

of my acquaintance could compose as rapidly. I am pleased with the dog scene and with the whole of George and Susan's love, but am more particularly struck with your serious conversations. They are very good throughout. St. Julian's history was quite a surprise to me. You had not very long known it yourself I suspect ; but I have no objection to make to the circumstance, and it is very well told. His having been in love with the aunt gives Cecilia an additional interest with him. I like the idea—a very proper compliment to an aunt ! I rather imagine indeed that nieces are seldom chosen but out of compliment to some aunt or another. I dare-say Ben was in love with me once, and would never have thought of you if he had not supposed me dead of scarlet fever. Yes, I was in a mistake as to the number of books. I thought I had read three before the three at Chawton, but fewer than six will not do. I want to see dear Bell Griffin again ; and had you not better give some hint of St. Julian's early history in the beginning of the story ?

We shall see nothing of Streatham while we are in town, as Mrs. Hill is to lie in of a daughter. Mrs. Blackstone is to be with her. Mrs. Heathcote and Miss Bigg ¹ are just leaving. The latter writes me word that Miss Blackford is married, but I have never seen it in the papers, and one may as well be single if the wedding is not to be in print.

Your affectionate Aunt,

J. A.

¹ Sisters to Mrs. Hill.

To Caroline, daughter of James Austen

Dec. 6 [1815].

MY DEAR CAROLINE,

I wish I could finish stories as fast as you can. I am much obliged to you for the sight of Olivia, and think you have done for her very well ; but the good-for-nothing father, who was the real author of all her faults and sufferings, should not escape unpunished. I hope *he* hung himself, or took the surname of *Bone*, or underwent some direful penance or other.

Yours affectionately,

J. AUSTEN.

To Caroline, daughter of James Austen

CHAWTON, July 15.

MY DEAR CAROLINE,

I have followed your directions, and find your handwriting admirable. If you continue to improve as much as you have done, perhaps I may not be obliged to shut my eyes at all half a year hence. I have been very much entertained by your story of Carolina and her aged father ; it made me laugh heartily, and I am particularly glad to find you so much alive upon any topic of such absurdity as the usual description of a heroine's father. You have done it full justice, or, if anything be wanting, it is the information of the venerable old man's having married when only twenty-one, and being a father at twenty-two.

I had an early opportunity of conveying your letter to Mary Jane, having only to throw it out of window at her as she was romping with your brother in the Back Court. She thanks you for it, and answers your questions through me. I am to tell you that she has passed her time at Chawton very pleasantly indeed, that she does not miss Cassy so much as she expected, and that as to "Diana Temple," she is ashamed to say it has never been worked at since you went away. . . .

Edward's visit has been a great pleasure to us. He has not lost one good quality or good look, and is only altered in being improved by being some months older than when we saw him last. He is getting very near our own age, for *we* do not grow older, of course.

Yours affectionately,

JANE AUSTEN.

To Caroline, daughter of James Austen

Jan., 1817.

The Pianoforte often talks of you ; in various keys, tunes, and expressions, I allow—but, be it Lesson or Country Dance, Sonata or Waltz, *you* are really its constant theme. I wish you could come and see us as easily as Edward can. . . .

You send me great news indeed, my dear Caroline, about Mr. Digweed, Mr. Trimmer, and a Grand Pianoforte. I wish it had been a small one, as then you might have pretended that Mr. D.'s rooms

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were too damp to be fit for it, and offered to take charge of it at the Parsonage.

I look forward to the four new chapters with great pleasure. But how can you like Frederick better than Edward? You have some eccentric tastes, however, I know, as to Heroes and Heroines. Good-bye.

Yours affectionately,

JANE AUSTEN.

To Caroline, daughter of James Austen

CHAWTON, *Wed., March 26, 1817.*

MY DEAR CAROLINE,

Pray make no apologies for writing to me often. I am always very happy to hear from you. . . .

I think you very much improved in your writing, and in the way to write a pretty hand. I wish you could practise your fingering oftener. Would not it be a good plan for you to go and live entirely at Mr. Wm. Digweed's? He could not desire any other remuneration than the pleasure of hearing you practise. •

I like Frederick and Caroline better than I did, but I must still prefer Edgar and Julia. Julia is a warm-hearted, ingenuous, natural girl, which I like her for; but I know the word *natural* is no recommendation to you. . . .

How very well Edward is looking! You can have nobody in your neighbourhood to vie with him at all, except Mr. Portal. I have taken one ride on

the donkey and like it very much—and you must try to get me quiet, mild days that I may be able to go out pretty constantly. A great deal of wind does not suit me, as I have still a tendency to rheumatism. In short, I am a poor honey at present. I will be better when you come and see us.

Yours affectionately,

JANE AUSTEN.

To Edward, son of James Austen

MRS. DAVID'S, COLLEGE STREET, WINTON.

Tues., May 27, 1817.

I know no better way, my dearest Edward, of thanking you for your most affectionate concern for me during my illness than by telling you myself, as soon as possible, that I continue to get better. I will not boast of my handwriting ; neither that nor my face have yet recovered their proper beauty, but in other respects I am gaining strength very fast. I am now out of bed from 9 in the morning till 10 at night ; upon the sofa, 'tis true, but I eat my meals with Aunt Cass. in a rational way, and can employ myself, and walk from one room to another. Mr. Lyford says he will cure me, and if he fails, I shall draw up a memorial and lay it before the Dean and Chapter. I have no doubt of redress from that pious, learned, and disinterested body.

Our lodgings are very comfortable. We have a neat little drawing-room with a bow-window overlooking Dr. Gabell's garden. Thanks to the

kindness of your father and mother in sending me their carriage, my journey hither on Saturday was performed with very little fatigue, and had it been a fine day, I think I should have felt none ; but it distressed me to see Uncle Henry and Wm. Knight, who kindly attended us on horseback, riding in the rain almost all the way. We expect a visit from them to-morrow, and hope they will stay the night ; and on Thursday, which is Confirmation and a holiday, we are to get Charles out to breakfast. We have had but one visit yet from *him*, poor fellow, as he is in the sick-room, but he hopes to be out to-night. We see Mrs. Heathcote every day, and William is to call upon us soon. God bless you, my dear Edward. If ever you are ill, may you be as tenderly nursed as I have been. May the same blessed alleviations of anxious, sympathising friends be yours : and may you possess, as I dare say you will, the greatest blessing of all in the consciousness of not being unworthy of their love. *I* could not feel this.

Your very affect^{te} Aunt,

J. A.

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